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RIERSON, JUDY SCOTT

A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EVALUATIVE MODEL FOR
THE GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM OF GREENSBORO CITY
SCHOOLS

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Ed.D. 1981

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A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EVALUATIVE MODEL
FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM
OF GREENSBORO CITY SCHOOLS


by

Judy Scott Rierson

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
1981

Approved by


Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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RIERSON, JUDY SCOTT. A Study of the Implementation of an Evaluative Model for the Gifted and Talented Program of the Greensboro City Schools. (1981) Directed by: Dr. Dale L. Brubaker, Pp. 113.

Special programs for gifted and talented students have been mandated by the state of North Carolina under the Creech Bill. Evaluation may be the very lifesaving tool for special programs. The purpose of this study was to do a theoretical analysis of several educational evaluation models and utilize one as a guide for examining the Gifted and Talented Program of the Greensboro City Schools.

Chapter I explained the purpose of the study, its scope, and its limitations. Various terms used in the study were defined and explained.

Chapter II further defined the term evaluation and explained its importance. Several guidelines and models for evaluating educational programs were analyzed and explained. Special problems and issues that have relevance when evaluating programs for gifted and talented students were discussed with references to pertinent literature studies. Keeping in mind the models and the problems involved in evaluation, the examiner selected the Renzulli and Ward DESDEG Model to apply to the actual evaluation of the Greensboro City Schools' Gifted and Talented Program.

Methods and procedures for synthesizing input information and instrument development completed the third chapter of the study. The method of investigation was nonstatistical evaluation through surveys and questionnaires, supplemented by observations and interviews. The questionnaires were distributed to a particular population in the Greensboro City School system, consisting of parents of identified gifted and talented students, their classroom teachers, resource teachers, and the students themselves. The information was collected from twenty-seven schools, grades one through six.

The information collected was broken down and analyzed by logical analysis, which categorizes information according to some common characteristic and attempts to discover patterns, trends, and discrepancies that exist in each category. The categories selected were curriculum, communication, overall effectiveness of the program, its strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for changes.

The final chapter summarized the results of the study and made conclusions about the effectiveness of the program, concluding with a discussion of recommendations for further study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the last few years, public school systems have been asked to assume and correct some of the social problems of our country: to reinvolve the disenchanted (students and professional staff), to remove racial prejudice from the classroom, to train future professionals regardless of their intellectual ability, to revitalize community agencies, and reeducate parents. As a result of these demands, new special educational programs are being pushed into existence. School boards, governmental agencies, and the general public are now asking about the effects of these special educational programs (Provus, 1971, p. 5). Are these special programs actually meeting the goals and objectives that have been established? Are these special programs actually serving a purpose in meeting the educational needs of the students they are serving?

Unfortunately, federal and state economies are requiring cuts in the areas of many special educational programs. Money for developing and continuing programs is becoming scarce. If some of these programs are to be continued and funded, there arises a need for some type of program evaluation.

A general concern for greater accountability in all aspects has called for evaluation. Numerous educational programs which have been

introduced into school systems by means of special funding have seemed sound and exciting, but have been dropped without hesitation when the special funding ran out. This action suggests that such schools are not able to recognize that the philosophy underlying the special efforts was an integral part of the fundamental philosophy of education (Newland, 1976, p. 234).

Therefore, evaluation may serve as the very lifesaving tool for special educational programs. The evaluation may be able to gather and emphasize such positive attitudes that a total program may be continued that might otherwise have been dropped. Programs need to be evaluated, both as to whether they provide adequately for their necessary components and as to whether they are functioning effectively.

The primary purpose of any type of evaluation is to gather, analyze, and disseminate information. Most contemporary theorists agree that the goal of evaluation is to measure the attainment of certain set objectives. However, evaluation of educational programs are much more complex to evaluate than other types. Most educational programs do not have agreed-upon fundamental objectives. What the programs expect to attain and therefore, what results to look for when evaluating are frequently vague. Even when program objectives are agreed upon, they require clarification before they can be understood. It is not easy to devise ways to evaluate the educational changes that take place in students or exactly what programs or aspects of school cause the change. Programs in special education are no exception.

North Carolina legislators passed Chapter 927 on July 1, 1977,

which amends Chapter 1293, the Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974, often referred to as the Creech Bill. This bill states that a free, appropriate, publicly supported education must be provided to all children with special needs. Gifted and talented students have been included in the definition of children with special needs. Therefore, special educational programs for identified gifted and talented children have been mandated throughout the state of North Carolina. However, there is constant competition for the limited resources made available for all exceptional children programs. Programs for gifted and talented children often have low priority and may be the first to be cut when there is a financial problem or system budget cut. Many people believe these particular students can achieve on their own without special educational programs to help them.

Evaluating programs for gifted and talented students presents special problems and issues to be examined, such as test reliability and validity, curriculum approaches, and highly individualized objectives for one student or a very small group of students. These and other practical problems will be discussed in Chapter II of this study.

Keeping in mind the special problems encountered when evaluating programs for gifted and talented students, several models and ideas for evaluating programs will be discussed within the context of a review of relevant literature.

The first three models discussed are general approaches to program evaluation that have been developed for use with all types of educational programs. They were not developed to be used specifically for gifted and talented programs, but have a broad enough organizational framework that they could be used for this purpose. The three models to be discussed are Stake's "Countenance" Model, Stufflebeam's CIPP (context, input, process, and product) Evaluation Model, and Provus' Discrepancy Model.

Eash's Differential Evaluation Model was developed for use in evaluating programs for gifted and talented students. It is broad enough, however, that it could be applied to other types of special educational programs.

All the models described provide powerful ideas and useful suggestions for planning evaluative studies; however, no single model meets all the evaluative needs of a given educational program. One of the evaluation models discussed in the literature review, the Renzulli and Ward Diagnostic and Evaluative Scales for Differential Education for the Gifted Model (DESDEG), will be modified and applied as a guide for an evaluation of the Greensboro City Schools' Gifted and Talented Program.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to complete an evaluative study of the Greensboro City Schools' Gifted and Talented Program

that would offer some indication of how effective the program is and offer suggestions for future changes, if needed. Objectives for evaluating the program are 1) to discover what the program goals and objectives are, whether they are being fulfilled, and if so, how effectively; 2) to determine the underlying policies and related activities that contribute to the success or failure of the program in particular areas; 3) to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the program from prime interest groups (those with direct or indirect involvement in the program that is being evaluated); 4) to identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement; and 5) to suggest realistic alternative courses of action for program modification.

Methodology

The descriptive research method was used for collecting the data in this study. A descriptive study determines and reports the way things are. Descriptive data are typically collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Generally, when one is asking questions which have not been asked before, instruments have to be developed by the examiner. A major problem which complicates descriptive research is the lack of response, i.e., failure of subjects to return the questionnaires. If there is a low response rate, valid conclusions cannot be drawn. If the percentage of returns is not at least seventy percent, the validity of the conclusions will be weak (Gay, 1976, p. 10).

Information for this study was gathered both formally and informally.

Informal methods consisted primarily of interviews and conversations with persons directly and responsibly involved with programs for gifted and talented students. Written documents concerning the operation of the program and observations of the program participants were also used initially. This information was beneficial in the development of the questionnaire forms.

Formally, the investigator developed questionnaires that were distributed to a particular population in the Greensboro City School system. Parents of identified gifted and talented students, their classroom teachers, the resource teachers of gifted and talented students, and the students themselves were surveyed. Twenty-seven primary and elementary schools in the Greensboro City Schools' system, grade levels one through six, were surveyed. Principals were not surveyed because of their indirect involvement in the program. Some of them were interviewed and helped in developing questions for the final questionnaire. Each principal at the twenty-seven schools gave his or her written permission to complete the study.

Anonymity was assured for all persons completing the questionnaire or interviewed. This was done to elicit honesty and openness in responses to the questionnaires.

A different questionnaire was prepared for each prime interest group, (parents, nonresource or classroom teachers, resource teachers, and students). Similar questions were included so that the responses could be compared among the groups surveyed. The questions asked covered opinions on the program's organization, identification

procedures, curriculum, communication, strengths, and weaknesses. Other questions were included as a direct request from some of the members of the prime interest groups interviewed prior to the development of the research instrument.

The initial response rate was such that a second mailing was not necessary. Eighty-four percent of the parents receiving the questionnaire responded. There was an eighty-one percent response rate from the nonresource or classroom teachers. There were fewer resource teachers of gifted and talented students and because the investigator had direct contact with these teachers, their rate of response was higher, ninety percent. Ninety-seven percent of the identified gifted and talented students responded. Their questionnaires were administered while they were attending their gifted and talented classes so it was much easier to collect information from them. The information gathered through the use of the questionnaires was used to evaluate and make suggestions for future modifications in the program.

The last chapter contains the investigator's subjective conclusions. Recommendations are also made for further research and study in the area of program evaluation, specifically programs for gifted and talented students.

Limitations of the Study

There are several major limitations associated with this study. The fact that it is designed as a self-report study means that some

responses may not be completely valid. Trained field observers and interviewers were not used to assure that each respondent was actually doing or really felt what was reported on the questionnaire forms. Even with anonymity, respondents of questionnaires do not always voice their opinions honestly.

Another limitation of the study is that the investigator is a specialist in the area of gifted and talented education and is employed as a resource teacher in the Greensboro City School system that is being evaluated. The investigator attempted to be as objective as possible in reviewing the information and data that were collected. Although a teacher of gifted and talented students in the Greensboro Program and a parent of two gifted and talented students, the investigator excluded herself from completing any of the questionnaires in the study in order not to bias the findings. However, because of the use of questionnaires as the method of collecting research data in this study, the interpretation of the data and the conclusions and recommendations must be based on the evaluator's subjective judgement.

Only first through sixth graders (and their teachers and parents) were included in the study. While this represents a total of six hundred and eighty students identified as gifted and talented, it does not include any of the junior or senior high students so identified. The Greensboro City Schools' system also offers placement in two alternative schools, an open and a traditional school setting. Both

of these schools have identified gifted and talented students, using the same state identification guidelines as all the other schools. However, because these students are served entirely in a regular classroom and do not participate in the resource program, they were not included in the present study. It was felt that there were not enough similarities in the provisions being made for the gifted and talented students to make an accurate comparison. Therefore, any conclusions drawn were limited to the program that is offered in grades one through six.

A further limitation of the study is that the questionnaires were administered to the identified gifted and talented students during one of their resource class meetings. While the investigator requested that resource teachers request another staff member administer the questionnaires, in order to allow the students the freedom of responding without the pressure of their teacher's presence, there was no way to be sure whether all the resource teachers were able to locate another competent person. Therefore, some of the students may have felt inhibited when completing the questionnaires.

Definition of Terms

Understanding the terminology and meaning of the language used in a setting is an essential aspect in understanding the study. The following terms have been used throughout the study and need to be

clarified at the onset.

Gifted and Talented Students: Gifted and talented students are defined as those students who 1) possess demonstrated or potential intellectual, creative, or specific academic abilities and 2) need differentiated educational services beyond those being provided by the regular school program in order to realize their potentialities for self and society. A student may possess singularly or in combination these characteristics: general intellectual ability, special academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking abilities (North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction, 1980).

Evaluate: The term "evaluate" means to gather, analyze, and disseminate information. It is also used to measure the attainment of certain set objectives.

Prime Interest Groups: Prime interest groups were identified for the purpose of answering questionnaires in the evaluation procedure. These groups consisted of people who have a direct or indirect interest in the gifted program being evaluated, i.e., the students, their parents, their classroom teachers, and their resource teachers.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature concerning educational evaluation yielded nine subtopics as avenues for exploration.

These subtopics are:

- 1) Definition and purpose of evaluation
- 2) General guidelines for educational evaluative studies
- 3) Formative and summative evaluation
- 4) Stake's "Countenance" Model
- 5) Stufflebeam's CIPP Evaluation Model
- 6) Provus' Discrepancy Model
- 7) Eash's Differential Model
- 8) Renzulli and Ward DESDEG Model
- 9) Special problems when evaluating programs for gifted and talented students

Each subtopic is dealt with separately.

Definition and Purpose of Evaluation

The term "evaluation" is used in this study rather than measurement, test, or examination because evaluation implies a process by which the values or objectives or standards of an enterprise are ascertained. To evaluate means to gather, analyze, and

disseminate information. Thus, evaluation can be one of the most effective tools for solving educational problems, which are as common as automobiles during rush hour. Yet educators avoid evaluation as a technique for solving these problems. Evaluation is one of the most widely discussed but little used processes in today's educational systems (Friedman & Anderson, 1979, p. 16).

Contemporary theorists feel that the important goal of any evaluation is to measure the attainment of certain set objectives--the accountability of educational programs. Evaluation can also indicate points where improvements might be necessary. An evaluation should reveal points of strength which ought to be continued and points where modifications need to be made. Actually, some form of educational evaluation has been in operation for a very long time, but the climate of accountability has been a more recent development brought about by social conditions and rising educational costs.

Another purpose of evaluation is public relations. No factor is as important in establishing constructive and co-operative relations between the community and the administrators as an understanding of the effects of an educational program. A careful and comprehensive evaluation should provide evidence that can be widely publicized and used to inform the community of the value of a school program. Many of the criticisms expressed by parents and others can be met and turned to cooperation if concrete evidence is available regarding the accomplishments of a program (Tyler, 1979, p. 10).

Evaluation provides information for action. Its primary justification is that it contributes to the rationalization of decision-making. Although it can serve to build knowledge and test theories, unless it gains serious hearing when program decisions are made, then it fails in one of its purposes (Alkin, 1979, p. 14).

Educational evaluations are more complex than any other kind. It is not easy to devise ways to measure the educational changes taking place in students. The task of administering, summarizing, and interpreting the results is often subjective because it is difficult to explain, predict, and control situations involving human beings. So many known and unknown variables operate in an educational setting that rigid controls cannot be established and it is difficult to generalize the results. Furthermore, measurement must be indirect, rather than precise most of the time (Gay, 1976, p. 5).

Interpretations of educational evaluations are usually needed for several different groups--students, teachers, administrators, parents, and patrons. Each group needs somewhat different information, or at least the data must be presented somewhat differently.

Schools do not always agree on their objectives. Because their expectations are uncertain, there is usually an uncertainty in what results to look for in the process of evaluation. Even when schools do agree on and state objectives, these are often vague and have to be clarified before they can be understood.

There are many more problems that plague conducting educational evaluation: inadequate preparation for research in action agencies, the low status of evaluation in academic circles, program ambiguities and fluidity, practitioner suspicions and resistance, organizational limitations on boundaries for study, access to data and design requirements, inadequate time for follow-up, inadequacies of money and staffing, and controls on publications (Weiss, 1979, p. 18).

General Guidelines for Educational Evaluative Studies

Several excellent guidelines were suggested by Brubaker and Bryson for conducting educational evaluative studies. These guidelines seem to have been written for planning evaluation studies for individuals, such as teacher and administrator evaluations, but are also applicable to planning program evaluation studies.

Guideline 1 - Evaluation is a philosophical dispute with oneself concerning what one thinks is important. Should this item be included? The examiner must make subjective decisions on what will or will not be included in the evaluation study. The decision to include some information or not reflects the evaluator's deep values and beliefs. Going through a discussion with oneself about what is important or not important in conducting the evaluation is one of the most crucial steps in the entire process. When developing questionnaires to be used in an evaluative study and selecting what questions are to be asked, the investigator is also facing the inclusion of his

values and beliefs. Recognizing this situation will allow the examiner to be more objective and avoid "touchy" questions.

Guideline 2 - In so far as it is possible to recognize his biases, an evaluator should try and distance himself from them while engaged in the evaluation process. "What are my basic assumptions about the evaluation process in which I am engaged and how does my language reflect my assumptions?" This guideline is especially important when the evaluator is also a part of the program that is being evaluated.

Guideline 3 - The following distinction should be clearly recognized. Evaluation as an unofficial informal process takes place whenever a person relates to himself, others, and the environment, but evaluation as an official process provides information that will be used by bureaucratic hierarchy in an organization as this hierarchy wishes to use it. Organizations (programs) have personalities of their own. They perform functions for their members in order to assure their survival. Evaluation studies provide them with the necessary information to carry out the survival. The evaluator feels that it is important that the evaluation information is used, even if it is used by the bureaucratic hierarchy. Too many times evaluation is completed on educational programs and suggestions are made for changes that would benefit the program and then the evaluation is never used, except to acknowledge that a study has been done.

Guideline 4 - Those involved in the evaluation process should recognize that measurement is one kind of evaluation, but it should not be used synonymously with the term "evaluation". Progress always can and should be measured. However, especially with evaluation of educational programs, there are many other worthwhile techniques besides measurement. Because of the type of program being evaluated in this study and the numerous problems that arise when objective measurement to decide on program effectiveness is used, this evaluator found it necessary to seek other means of evaluation.

Guideline 5 - It should be recognized that the evaluator models the principles of evaluation for the person being evaluated. The verbal and nonverbal language used by the evaluator sets the stage for discussion between parties to the evaluation process. It is also important that the evaluator establish some continuity in understanding the terminology used in the evaluation study. Everyone involved in the study should be aware of the language being used and its meaning.

Guideline 6 - The evaluator should try, in so far as possible, to accept the person being evaluated at the starting point and convey belief in the person's demonstrated ability as well as potential for future growth. This guideline refers to the evaluation of individuals. However, it can apply to programs as well. The evaluator must accept the program that is being evaluated where it is at the starting point. The evaluator needs to feel that the study will provide opportunity for the program's improvement and growth. Otherwise, the evaluation study would be useless.

Guideline 7 - Since evaluation is enhanced by an ongoing dialogue between the evaluator and the person or program being evaluated, it is important to cooperatively develop when and where evaluation procedures can take place. This guideline is a powerful one because it allows for the feeling of "I'm included". The beginning should be a discussion of the goals and objectives of the evaluation. The personnel involved in the program being evaluated must be involved at all times in what is happening in the evaluation process. They must feel that they are being included or they will not be cooperative in making modifications in the program if the evaluation study finds that they are needed.

Guideline 8 - Evaluation should be made on a periodic basis with the time frame clear to all. There should be continuous visits with appropriate feedback after each visit. Program evaluation should be an integral part of the development of any educational program. There should be money made available in the budget for periodic evaluation of the program. Well developed procedures for evaluation should be a part of all programs' initial planning.

Guideline 9 - The evaluator should not feel totally responsible for the change process when the evaluation is complete. The problem of "ownership" of the change process is prevalent in program evaluation. The evaluator needs to be aware of the problem and be able to communicate with those being evaluated well enough to convey the problem.

Guideline 10 - An authentic balance should be strived toward during the evaluation process. An evaluation of any kind would not be all positive or all negative. Every program will have some strengths and some areas that need to be improved. Emphasis should not be placed on the program's strengths and neither should the program's needs be emphasized. An evaluative study is more acceptable to those involved in the program if there is a good balance between the positive and the negative.

Guideline 11 - Specific targets should be cooperatively identified as a result of the feedback process so that there is focus for improvement. Suggestions for changes are of no benefit unless the program being evaluated is able to use them. The evaluator needs to work with the persons involved in the program being evaluated (usually those with roles in the decision-making process) to identify what would be the most appropriate and realistic areas in which to make changes. There also needs to be a mutual decision of how the changes will be implemented.

Guideline 12 - If an evaluation instrument is used, it must be able to demonstrate legally that it was designed to improve the instructional program and can pass constitutional muster. The evaluator must be well prepared before committing himself to the task of evaluating an educational program (Brubaker & Bryson, 1980, pp. 61-63).

Formative and Summative Evaluation

Throughout the research literature, two evaluation designs are mentioned singly and in combination for planning the evaluation of educational programs: formative and summative evaluation. These are predetermined plans that will guide how an evaluation is conducted, and also decide the role of the evaluator since it will be different in both instances. A combination of both plans may be used.

A great deal of research has been done in the area of formative evaluation. Most of the writing seems to be an elaboration of a very simple concept, but it has become one of the most predominant concepts in evaluation today.

Eva Baker (Provus, 1931) wrote that formative evaluation consisted of information and judgements made through data collection that could assist in revising or improving various educational programs, e.g., gifted and talented programs. She felt the important part of formative evaluation was the feedback being given as the program goes along, rather than after everything was completed.

Michael Scriven (1967) is attributed with being the founder of formative evaluation. He defines it as continuous in-process feedback so that appropriate modifications can be made as the program progresses. The evaluator gathers information and judges the deficiencies and successes of a program in order to make it better. Formative evaluation should do everything in its power to

help an instructional program work better. Emphasis is placed on when data are gathered rather than the types of data used (Popham, 1974, p. 14).

The primary advantage of formative evaluation is that the data gathered are in close proximity to the specific parts of the program and are therefore better able to pinpoint the successes and failures of particular activities.

Formative evaluation must have serious commitments to change. It is only useful if it is able to indicate where change is needed and if that change is in the realm of possibility (Renzulli & Smith, 1980, p. 98).

Summative evaluation differs from formative evaluation in the role that it fulfills. It refers to assessment focused on completed instructional programs. Summative evaluation is looking at the overall effectiveness of whatever is being evaluated. This type of evaluation is usually used when a decision whether to adopt something or continue something already in progress is needed. More often it is used in a political sense when the fate of an educational program is at stake.

Summative evaluators do not provide feedback all along the way but at the end. The same evaluation data and even the same instruments that are used in formative evaluation can be used when completing summative evaluation. The big difference is that summative evaluators need longer periods of time. Instead of collecting information at

shorter intervals, they will usually collect it at the beginning and at the end of the evaluative study (Popham, 1975, p. 14).

Three other concepts were mentioned repeatedly in the literature: product, process, and presage evaluation. There are types of data rather than evaluative designs, providing the kinds of information that an evaluator focuses on in organizing and conducting an evaluative study. For evaluation of programs for gifted and talented students, these types of data are limited.

Scriven describes an evaluation approach that focuses on the effects of a program as product or payoff evaluation. The data document evidences of change in a student's performance that would not have taken place if the student had not been involved in the particular program. One of the major responsibilities of the product evaluator is to determine what types of information are most necessary for facilitating the judgement process, because some form of human judgement must be used. Types of product evaluation data would be scores on standardized and teacher-made tests, criterion-referenced measurements, ratings of student products or performance by experts, student attitude measurements, and the use of logs, checklists, or an analysis of school records. (Renzulli & Smith, 1980, pp. 101-102).

The emphasis in product evaluation is clearly on the outcomes produced by the program. These outcomes must relate to the program's objectives and make a comparison between the expectations

and the actual results.

Process evaluation is required when an educational program is up and running; it is concerned with what goes on in a program. Process evaluators monitor the actual instructional procedures in order to help the instructional decision makers anticipate and overcome procedural difficulties. (Popham, 1975, p. 36).

Process evaluation is almost always used in formative evaluation. The use of process evaluation with summative evaluation becomes a threat to teachers if the data will be used in making judgements about their teaching ability.

Intrinsic or presage evaluation attends more to the internal characteristics of an instructional program, on factors which are assumed to have a significant impact on outcomes or products. It is also useful in evaluating nonproduct dimensions of a program, such as identification and screening procedures for gifted and talented students (Thorndike & Hagen, 1977, p. 89).

Figure 1

Use of evaluative data

Product or Payoff	Process	Presage or Intrinsic
Formative Evaluation		
Summative Evaluation		

There are several fine evaluation models available for use in educational programs. The first three models that will be discussed were not developed specifically for evaluating programs for gifted and talented students. However, they are broad enough in their organizational framework so that they can be used for this purpose.

Stake's "Countenance" Model

The Stake's "Countenance" Model is a general approach to educational program evaluation. Stake's conception of evaluation emphasizes two chief operations--description and judgement. It distinguishes between descriptive and judgemental acts according to three phases: antecedent, transaction, and outcome data. Antecedent data are conditions existing prior to instruction that may relate to the outcomes. Examples would be a student's prior experiences, aptitude, interests, and willingness.

Transactions refer to the succession of engagements that constitute the process of instruction. The transaction data refer to interactions between teacher and student as well as class discussions, administration of tests, presentation of films, etc.

Outcomes refer to the effects of the instructional program. This refers to both long-range and immediate effects. Outcomes would include measurements of the impact of instruction, effects of the learning environment, costs incurred, etc.

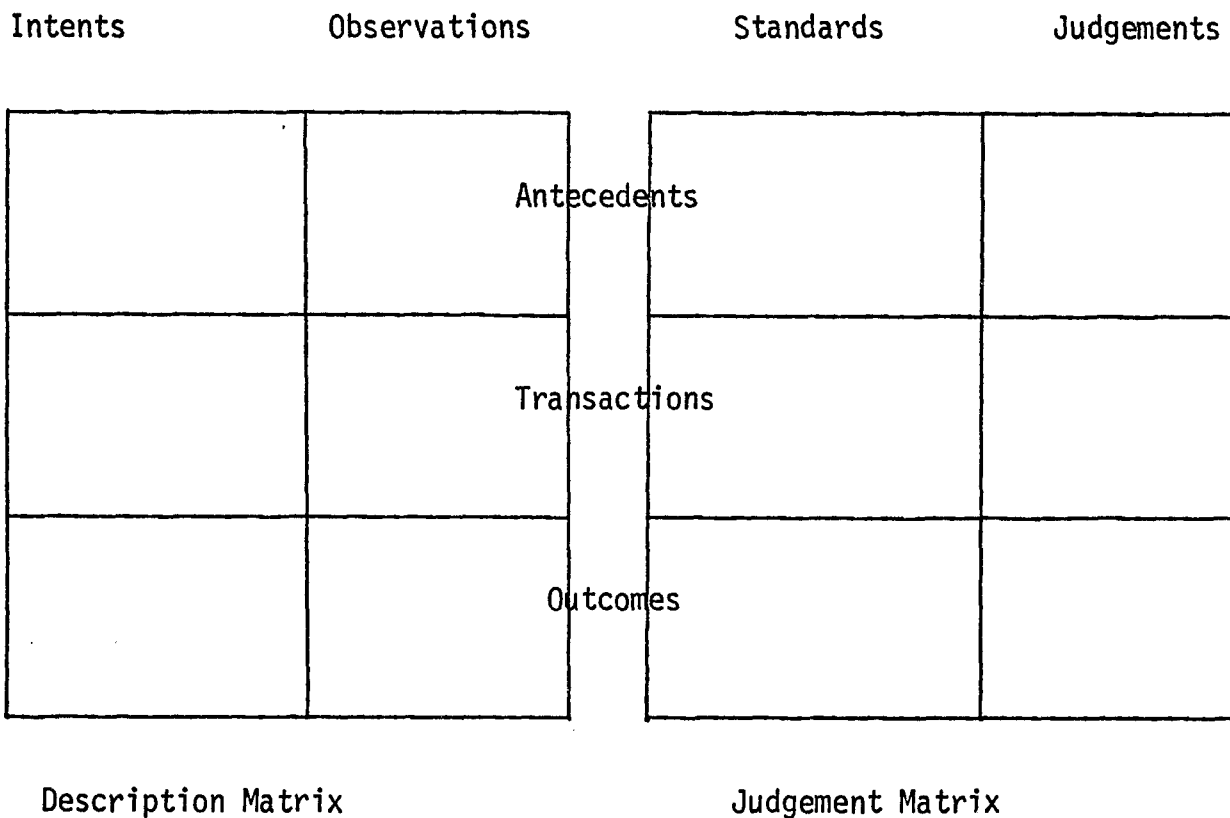
Stake divides the descriptive acts into what was intended and

what was actually observed. He divides the judgemental acts into the standards used in reaching judgements and the actual judgements.

The evaluator seeks to determine how and to what degree the antecedents, transactions, and outcomes relate to each other. The evaluation is a descriptive record of what educators intend to happen in those three areas and what is actually observed. The evaluator also determines the set of standards to need and whether each standard is met. This gives an overall rating of the program's merit.

Figure 2

Stake's "Countenance" Model



Stake is calling for both complete description and judgement. He is directing the evaluator to describe existing educational conditions before judging them against standards. His model also dictates specific roles to the evaluator. There is very little flexibility (Popham, 1975, p. 31).

Stufflebeam's CIPP Model

One of the best known educational evaluation schemes is the CIPP Model originated by Daniel Stufflebeam and Egon Guba. CIPP is an acronym for the four types of evaluation data this model tries to identify: context, input, process, and product evaluation. The three major steps are delineating information to be collected, obtaining the information, and then providing the information to the decision makers (Popham, 1975, p. 35).

Context evaluation identifies the needs and defines the problems that need to be solved. This type of evaluation data is completed at the beginning of the evaluation study and is written in descriptive form. It also defines the goals and objectives of the program being evaluated.

Input evaluation develops a plan for implementing strategies to meet the goals and objectives of the program (staffing, budgeting, etc.). This type is also descriptive in form.

Process evaluation collects data continuously so that the outcomes can be interpreted and changes made when the evaluator feels

that they are necessary. This type of evaluation is very important because it assists personnel in continuously improving the educational program.

Product evaluation tells how effective the entire program has been after it has completed a full cycle. Decisions to continue, terminate, or modify a program are often influenced by this type of evaluation.

Common to each of the stages of evaluation is a general structure for implementation which includes focusing the evaluation, information collection, information organization, information analysis, information reporting, and administration of the evaluation.

The Stufflebeam CIPP Model is workable but cumbersome. It is complex and costly and requires a large staff in order to be implemented satisfactorily. While much of the Stufflebeam CIPP Model is incorporated in other models, the important factor to this model is continuous feedback so that improvements can be made as the program progresses instead of at its conclusion (Renzulli, 1975, p. 21).

The primary purpose of Stufflebeam's CIPP Model is to produce information for decision makers. However, the steps or processes involved in making the decisions are not clearly defined in the explanation of the model. Stufflebeam's model also dictates specific roles to the evaluator. Therefore, there is very little flexibility (Friedman & Anderson, 1979, p. 16).

Figure 3
Stufflebeam's CIPP Model

	Context Evaluation	Input Evaluation	Process Evaluation	Product Evaluation
Objective				
Method				
Relation to Decision Making in the Change				

Provus' Discrepancy Model

Malcolm Provus has developed the Discrepancy Evaluation Model which has five distinct stages: design, installation, process, product, and cost. At each of the stages a comparison is made between reality and some standard or standards. The comparison often shows differences, which are called discrepancies. On the basis of the comparisons, information is provided to program staff, giving them a rational basis on which to make adjustments in the program. (Provus, 1971, p. 46).

Every question involves a criterion, new information, and a decision. Evaluation provides the new information. Every aspect of the educational program is evaluated and comparisons are made.

Stage 1 is called the design stage. At this stage program standards and structures are defined by the program staff. The information collected is compared to a set of design criteria to see if a discrepancy exists. If so, the information is fed back to the program so that changes can be made.

In the second stage, called the installation stage, the evaluator compares the reality of the program with the information discovered in Stage 1. Again a comparison is made and if a discrepancy is found, information is fed back to the program for changes to be made.

Process is Stage 3 of the model. To judge whether the program is achieving its objectives, discrepancy information based on the actual program performance of students is analyzed. If there are corrective measures needed, these are examined and installed.

Stage 4 is the product stage where actual terminal products are compared to hypothesized ones. The program outcomes are assessed and the program is tested to see if it can be generalized.

The last stage is that of product comparison. It assists in choosing between programs by analyzing the cost benefits to determine program efficiency.

The information collected at each stage and the criteria used are as follows:

<u>Stages</u>	<u>Information Collected</u>	<u>Criterion</u>
Design	Program Structure	Design Criteria
Installation	Input-Process Performance	Program Design
Process	Process-Output Performance	Process-Product Relationships
Product	Input-Output Relationships	Terminal Objectives
Product Comparison	Input-Output Comparability	Cost Analysis

(Renzulli, 1975, p. 23)

The Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model, even in its revised form, is very complex and intricate, and requires a great deal of training in order to be used. However, it does utilize a combination of formative evaluation in the first four stages and summative evaluation in the fifth stage. Provus' Model also dictates specific roles to the evaluator and thus lacks some flexibility (Friedman & Anderson, 1971, p. 16).

Eash's Differential Evaluation Model

Maurice J. Eash, from the University of Illinois, has developed a differential evaluation model designed specifically for new and innovative programs and has been recommended to be used in evaluating

gifted and talented programs. Eash's model is a three-stage evaluation method that parallels the stages of program maturation. Stage one is the initiatory model--planning of goals, specifications, and operations. Stage two is the developmental stage--actual construction and testing of a program in field operation. This takes place after the program activities begin to stabilize. Stage three is the integral stage--predicting the outcomes of program activities. For each of the stages, Eash considers effort (how time is spent), effect (products and outcomes), and efficiency (the relationship of the efforts and resources to the effects achieved). The application of these three factors will be specific to the nature of each model and will seek different data. As the program moves from the initiatory stage to the integrated stage, increased emphasis is placed on product evaluation.

One of the key benefits of this model is that the evaluation is carried along a continuum. Each stage of an educational program is evaluated. The model is less specific to gifted and talented education than it claims to be. It is more applicable for the evaluation of any new and innovative educational program and really has more relevance to general educational evaluation. Eash's model allows for modifications and alterations of a program and its objectives over a period of time. It makes sense that evaluation procedures should be differentiated for the different stages in program development (Renzulli, 1975, p. 24).

Figure 4

Eash's Differential Model

	Initatory Stage	Developmental Stage	Integrated Stage
Effort			
Effect			
Efficiency			

Renzulli's DESDEG Model

The fifth model is the Diagnostic and Evaluative Scales for Differential Education for the Gifted (DESDEG) developed by Joe Renzulli and Virgil Ward as a guide for both self-study and for documenting the value of programs for gifted and talented students.

This model was used as a guide in the current study in evaluating the Greensboro City Schools Gifted and Talented Program. The DESDEG model translates many of the theoretical concepts in program evaluation into a practical, useable plan and is flexible enough to account for the relatively unique characteristics of gifted and talented students.

The DESDEG model consists of four sequential steps or phases. Step one is front-end analysis. The purpose of this step is to help the evaluator identify key features of the program being evaluated--

the major factors that contribute to the effectiveness of a program. It is important to find out what types of information are of concern to prime interest groups. These groups consist of people who have a direct or indirect interest in the program, for example, students, parents, and teachers. The information needed can come from various sources. A comprehensive review of all written material relating to the program should lend an idea of the program objectives and how it operates.

Open-ended questionnaires can be designed and administered by the evaluator. The surveys should be conducted on a representative sample of each prime interest group and should allow them to voice their concerns about the program.

Reviewing the questionnaires should give the evaluator enough information to conduct interviews with representatives of each prime interest group.

The final way of receiving input information is observation of the program in progress. This is a means of finding out the way the program really is.

Step two is the synthesis of input information and instrument development. This step, perhaps the most difficult, is that of selecting and constructing appropriate data-gathering instruments that will be relevant to each of the key features. As mentioned earlier in this study, standardized tests and criterion-referenced tests may fail to yield the kind of information on gifted and

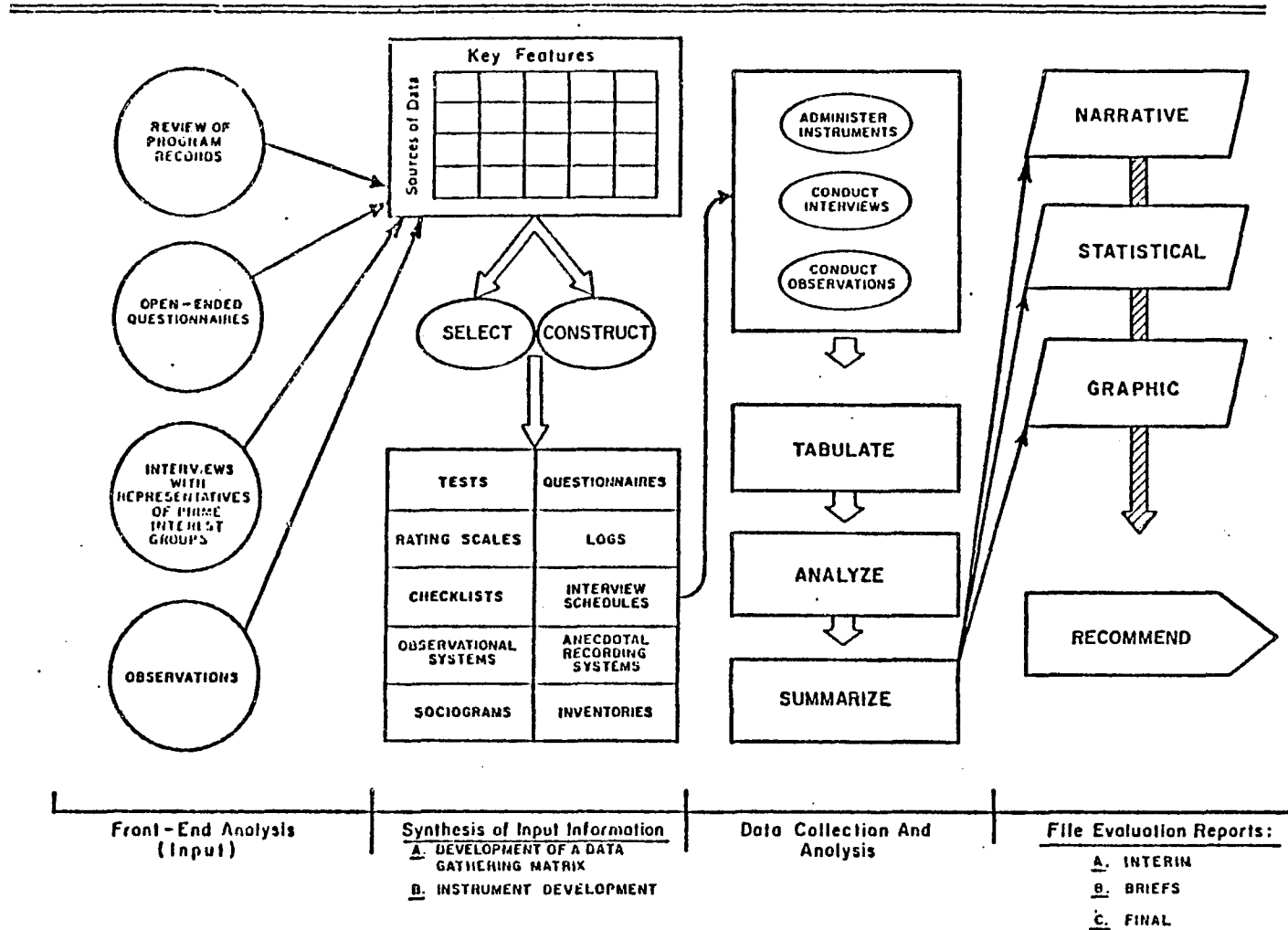
talented students that is needed. Objective testing can be replaced by other items such as checklists, logs, observations, questionnaires, sociograms, and rating scales.

The third step is the actual data collection and analysis. Timing is very important in terms of how often information is gathered and the time required to obtain information. Once the information is gathered, it must be broken down and analyzed by either logical analysis or statistical analysis. Logical analysis categorizes information according to some common characteristic and attempts to discover patterns, trends, or discrepancies that exist in each category and between the prime interest groups. The statistical approach summarizes large sets of numerical information. The data collected will determine the kind of analytical approach.

Step four is preparing a final evaluation report. After all the information has been gathered and analyzed, a final report needs to be written. An introductory chapter will describe the program and the evaluative design used. Each chapter should be organized around a key feature. The methods of data collecting should be described, followed by the results. Each chapter should be followed by a brief summary. The final chapter should be a general summary of the entire evaluation--the program's strengths and the areas needing improvement, and recommendations warranted by the findings of the evaluation study (Renzulli & Smith, 1980, pp. 108-111).

While all the models have made valuable contributions to educational program evaluation, no single one meets all the needs of a given program. Because of differences in program structures, availability of resources, and the general orientation of evaluators, an evaluator should select the most useful concepts and ideas from each model according to the evaluation needs of the program.

Figure 5
 OVERVIEW OF THE KEY FEATURES EVALUATION SYSTEM



Special Problems in Evaluation of Programs
for Gifted and Talented Students

Evaluation of programs for gifted and talented students presents special problems and issues that may not be found in other educational programs. There are several measurement and statistical problems in evaluating gifted and talented students and their progress in a special educational program. Students that have been identified as gifted and talented usually score at the upper end of the normal curve on achievement tests. Most students included in the program score in the ninety-six percentile or above. Therefore, it is very difficult to show progress or growth when there is not enough room to grow. Also students tend to "regress to the mean". If the students score exceptionally high on a pretest, they will more than likely decrease their score on a posttest.

The reliability of tests is affected when administered to a group of gifted and talented students. Test reliability is a function of group diversity. The more heterogeneous the group, the higher the reliability. A sample made up of children from a wide range of socioeconomic levels and intellectual ability levels will tend to yield higher reliability coefficients than a very homogeneous group (Thorndike & Hagan, 1977, p. 89).

Another special problem in evaluating gifted and talented programs is with the kind of curriculum being presented to the students.

Most programs for gifted and talented students have committed themselves to developing higher level thinking processes (such as Bloom's analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). Programs usually emphasize creative behaviors, divergent thinking, decision making, and affective behaviors. All of these kinds of curriculum offerings are difficult to measure objectively. There have not been enough tests made available to adequately assess progress in these areas of learning. Torrance, Guilford, and Frank Williams have all developed tests for evaluating creativity in students. The problem with their tests is that they are very difficult to administer and the scoring is very subjective. Two people would not score the same test the same way. There are also no established norms from which to make any comparative studies.

Most programs for gifted and talented students are characterized by highly individualized objectives for one student or a very small group of students. It would be difficult to show progress when only a few students would be evaluated on each objective. Robert Stake believes these "complex objectives would be one hundred times that of administering a forty-five minute standardized paper-and-pencil test and the amount of time, personnel, and facilities necessary for such evaluation may be astronomical" (Stake, 1974, p. 199). Also, the errors of testing increase markedly when we move from highly specific areas of performance to items which attempt to measure higher mental processes and unreached human potential. The only reason the test error is tolerated in standardized instruments is

that few important educational decisions are based on test scores alone.

There are also some practical problems associated with evaluating programs for gifted and talented students. Evaluation takes time, money, and trained personnel. Most programs have limited resources; all their time, money, and personnel must go to the development and operation of the program, and nothing is left for evaluation purposes.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The Greensboro Gifted and Talented Program has had an interesting history and has undergone many changes caused by internal and external forces, including national and state laws. In 1975, a group of concerned parents, having been involved with an organization called Gateways, felt that gifted youth in the city were not being adequately serviced to the extent of their abilities and potential. They put pressure on the Greensboro Board of Education to do some type of planning to meet these students' needs more effectively. This pressure established a need for a new setting and a feeling that the existing setting (regular classroom) was not desirable for meeting the needs of more able students.

The Greensboro Board of Education hired a person to be a planning consultant. His role was to establish a core group for writing and submitting a proposal to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for a three-year pilot program for gifted and talented students. Three teachers were selected to serve nine schools. One member was in charge of two schools, a kindergarten-through-six grade school and a junior high school. Another member had the responsibility for three schools, a pair of elementary schools (kindergarten-through-third grade and a four-through-six grade) and a junior high school. The third member was working in a cluster

of schools (kindergarten-through-second grade, third-through-fourth grade, and fifth-through-sixth grade) and a junior high school.

Each member of the core group was on his/her own in understanding what gifted education meant. Different means of identifying students were interpreted in different ways by the various members. There was no established curriculum or any curriculum guides. Each person worked with his/her students according to their own interpretation of gifted education.

The second year of the program four staff members were added and three more schools. The third year of the program two staff members were added and no new schools. This marked the end of the pilot program.

From 1977 until the current study, the program was beyond the pilot stage or an option in the schools, but has expanded into all of the schools in the Greensboro system. Major changes have been made. The group of twelve teachers and a co-ordinator have established goals, objectives, and accepted a unified curriculum outline of topics and concepts to be used by all the members of the program. The program has also accepted and utilized the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's identification and screening procedures.

Six hundred and ninety-eight students in grades one through six have been identified and are being served in a one-day-a-week resource program. These students were selected by group intelligence

test percentile scores, achievement test percentile scores, a teacher subjective checklist in the areas of learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership, and performance in the classroom, and also grades where applicable. The identification procedures have been controversial and provide one area of investigation.

The overall program goal is the same for all grade levels: to develop the intellectual, creative, and affective potential of the student. The objectives of the program are:

- 1) to enable the student to develop the higher level cognitive processes
- 2) to enhance the creative potential of the student through experiences involving the creative behaviors
- 3) to help the student develop his/her affective potential through leadership skills, values clarification, and independent learning.

A primary purpose of conducting a program evaluation is to see whether the objectives are being met and, if so, how well. But an evaluation should not limit itself to merely evaluating goals and objectives.

The outcomes of educational programs are not completely predictable, and hence to evaluate only for those goals one has intended can lead one to neglect equally important, and at times even more important, outcomes that were unintended. Using objectives to serve as criteria for evaluating educational programs has an important function to perform, but a conception of evaluation that limits itself to what has been preplanned in terms of goals and objectives is likely to be educationally thin. (Eisner, 1979, p. 174)

For that reason, the current study will examine many aspects of Greensboro's Gifted and Talented Program.

Front-End Analysis

Step one of the DESDEG model called for front-end analysis (input information) and identification of key features of the program being evaluated. The evaluator was able to gain an overview of the entire program and select key features to be evaluated through review of all available written material relating to the program. The review of written documents consisted of a study of the program's statement of philosophy and goals, guidelines and instruments used in student identification and screening, curriculum guides and materials, description of the student population, list of behavioral objectives and learning activities, and a description of the staff and criteria for staff selection.

A second source of information that helped the evaluator to develop the questionnaires was interviews with representatives of each prime interest group. Interviews were conducted with the director and other persons who were involved in the initial stages of the program's development.

Knowledge was also gained through the open-ended questionnaires completed by representatives of each prime interest group. Respondents were asked what questions they would like to have answered by the evaluation study and what were some of the things that were bothering them about the program.

Observations were made of the program in progress by the evaluator in other settings besides the one in which the evaluator was involved. The observations allowed the evaluator to see the program the way it is.

Figure 6

Input Information

Sources of Data	Key Features
Program Documents	
Open-ended Questionnaires	
Interviews	
Observations	

Key Features Identified

Step two is where the evaluator synthesizes all the information that has been collected and identifies the key features or concerns. From the synthesis, the evaluator can decide what instruments and/or techniques will be used to evaluate each key feature or concern and

from whom the information can be obtained.

From the front-end analysis of the Greensboro Gifted and Talented Program, the following key features or concerns have been identified for evaluation concentration: curriculum, communication, overall effectiveness of program, strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for change.

Probably the most difficult task when evaluating programs for gifted and talented students is the selection and construction of instruments to use in evaluating the designated key features. As mentioned earlier, standardized tests and creativity tests are not valid means of evaluating growth for gifted and talented students. Therefore, it may be necessary to construct instruments which will provide more information about the effectiveness of the program.

The list of evaluation tools that can be used instead of objective tests includes such items as rating scales, checklists, journals, observations, sociograms, questionnaires, logs, interviews, anecdotal recordings, and inventories. The evaluator used a combination of journals, observations, interviews, and questionnaires for the data collection on Greensboro's Gifted and Talented Program. The evaluator found that the questionnaires were the most effective means of information gathering and the results of the questionnaires would receive the most emphasis in the evaluation findings.

Figure 7

Matrix of Key Features and Sources of Data

	Curriculum	Communication	Overall Effectiveness	Strengths and Weaknesses	Suggestions for Change
Students	Questionnaires Journals Observations		Questionnaires Journals		Questionnaires
Nonresource Teachers		Questionnaires	Questionnaires Interviews	Questionnaires	Questionnaires
Parents	Questionnaires Interviews	Questionnaires	Questionnaires Interviews	Questionnaires	Questionnaires
Resource Teachers (Gifted and Talented)			Questionnaires	Questionnaires	Questionnaires

Data Collection and Analysis

Once the evaluator has identified the key features or concerns, sources of data, and instruments necessary for collecting information, the third step is the actual data collection and analysis. The questionnaires mentioned in the front-end analysis explanation and a pilot study using five representatives from each prime interest group were used in developing the questionnaires. The final revised questionnaires used with each prime interest group are shown in the appendices.

Each member of the administrative staff of the Greensboro City Schools system and all the principals of the twenty-seven schools that were surveyed were sent a copy of the evaluator's request to conduct the study stating the purpose of the study, questions to be asked, and to whom the questionnaires would go. Written approval was received from each principal involved. (Sample letter is in Appendix B.)

During the months of January and February, 1981, copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the program teachers (teachers of the gifted and talented), classroom teachers, students, and parents of identified gifted and talented students. The subjects were told that their responses to the questionnaires would remain anonymous. Their names or school locations were not used in this final report of the study. Respondents were asked to answer all the items on the questionnaire.

Each questionnaire was coded for the purpose of providing feedback to the respondents and for follow-up to remind participants about completing the questionnaires. The evaluator was keenly aware that if there were not at least seventy percent response that the validity of the conclusions would be weak (Gay, 1976, p. 132). By the middle of March, 1981, enough questionnaires from each of the prime interest groups had been received to provide sufficient information to be included in the study.

Two hundred and forty-nine questionnaires were distributed to the classroom teachers with identified gifted and talented students in their classrooms participating in the program in the twenty-seven kindergarten-through-six grade schools. Two hundred and three of the nonresource teachers or classroom teachers returned completed questionnaires for a eighty-one percent response. Five hundred and ninety-two of the six hundred and ninety-seven parents of identified students returned their completed questionnaires to the individual schools for an eighty-four percent response rate.

The student response was much higher than the nonprogram teachers or parents because it was administered during an actual scheduled time when the student was involved in the gifted and talented resource program. Teachers of the gifted and talented were asked to request another staff member to administer the questionnaires so as to allow the students to be more open with their responses. Six hundred and eighty of the six hundred and ninety-eight students who qualified

for placement in the gifted and talented program completed the questionnaires for a ninety-seven percent response. Because of the high percentage of response, no attempts were made to have the students who were absent or had failed to turn in a questionnaire complete one at a later time.

Also, a high response rate came from the resource teachers in the program. There are twelve members of Greensboro's Gifted and Talented Program in grades one through six. The evaluator, although one of these staff members, excluded herself from the study. Ten of the program teachers returned their questionnaires for a ninety percent response.

Table 1

Number and percent of questionnaires returned

Prime Interest Groups	Questionnaires Issued	Questionnaires Returned	Percent Returned
Parents	697	592	84%
Classroom Teachers	249	203	81%
Students	698	680	97%
Resource Teachers	11	10	90%

Once the information was collected, the evaluator analyzed the data collected. There are two basic ways to analyze educational data: logical analysis and statistical analysis. In logical analysis, the evaluator categorizes information according to some common characteristic (such as the key features in the DESDEG model) and attempts to locate some trend or pattern that exists. Statistical analysis summarizes large sets of numerical information and makes statements concerning the significance of observed differences among groups. With the type of instrument used in this study and the nature of data collected, the evaluator chose to use logical analysis for reporting the findings of the evaluation.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The best way to report the findings of the evaluation is to organize around each of the key features that have been identified. Input from each prime interest group will be related for comparison. Information which was not included for each prime interest group but has some effect on the evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the program will also be related.

Effectiveness of the Curriculum

The first key feature mentioned was the effectiveness of the curriculum provided for the identified gifted and talented students. The North Carolina State guidelines for the identification of gifted and talented students state that these students "need differentiated educational services beyond those being provided by the regular school program in order to realize their potentialities for self and society"(Identification of Gifted and Talented, Division for Exceptional Children Guidelines, July, 1980). Differentiate means to make different and that is what the Greensboro Gifted and Talented Program strives to do.

The curriculum is based on cognitive, creative, and affective thinking skills. The students extend these thinking abilities through various established selected topics of interest. The four

major content areas (math, language arts, science, and social studies) are integrated through the various activities.

Parents of identified gifted and talented students were asked on their questionnaire how they felt about the curriculum of the program. Ample space was left for elaboration. Four hundred and twelve or sixty-nine percent of the parents surveyed responded that the present curriculum was strong or very good. Fifty-five or nine percent of the parents responding to the questionnaire felt they did not know enough about the curriculum to make any comments one way or the other. Fifty-four or nine percent of the parents did not make any comments about the curriculum. Seventy-one or thirteen percent of the parents elaborated on the question with comments, positive and negative, which would enable those involved in the program to see how the curriculum is really perceived and understood.

Table 2

Parent Response About G/T Curriculum

Percent of parents Responding	Strong; Very good	Do not know enough about the curriculum	No Comments	Other
84%	69%	9%	9%	13%

Some of the other comments that were made by the parents will be most helpful for those involved in the program to be aware of for future planning.

1) The material covered in the program for gifted and talented students has been something different and completely separate from the classroom. The experiments with immediate results is great and the ones with delayed results are good for balance.

2) Special children need something different from basic school studies to help them realize there is more to life, and this program has done this.

3) Curriculum should provide more enrichment in the form of plays, concerts, and field trips.

4) The curriculum needs more advanced work in the "3 R's" or just a challenging program in math and reading. These could be used in conjunction with the program now. To think, reason, and formulate questions is good, but a more advanced program in the different areas of curriculum should also be provided.

5) The material needs to be different from the regular classroom. The students need to be taught to be logical and independent thinkers.

6) There should be more emphasis on academic skills, such as math. The regular classroom does not provide the needed challenge in academic areas.

7) The curriculum should relate to that of the regular classroom.

In the gifted and talented class, the children should be able to go into more depth in certain areas and thus contribute more in their own classrooms when these subjects are discussed.

8) It is good that the program is not merely an enrichment program covering the same subjects as the regular classroom. It is not just "more of the same". The introduction of unusual topics seems to be more conducive to developing creativity. The communications unit seemed especially helpful in developing critical thinking skills.

9) The classes should go into more extensive, prolonged study and research. There is too much jumping from subject to subject.

10) A child can be gifted in many areas, including art, music, sports, dance, etc. Some consideration could and should be given toward these areas.

11) There ought to be a better way to incorporate the gifted and talented program into the school life, so there is little loss from other studies, or at least a reasonable balance of loss and gain.

12) There should be more field trips. Topics of domestic and international importance--such as global food shortages, emergence of third world countries, energy--should be introduced.

13) A more varied curriculum would make the program more enjoyable and keep the interest up.

14) The scientific and analytical subjects should be balanced with the creative (creative writing, poetry, dramatics, and art

appreciation).

15) Throughout the past, society has generated many magnificent writers. Children in the program for gifted and talented should be exposed to more of these authors. They should be taught the value of the classics and how to appreciate them. The curriculum, while successful in introducing new concepts, does not challenge the child where it is needed.

16) The principal, classroom teacher, parents, and others who will deal with the gifted and talented child should definitely work as a team (along with the child) in the curriculum process. The students themselves know what they want and need. By all means, stress more of the "T" in gifted and talented, and start as early as is possible.

17) The curriculum needs to be geared more to goals and objectives that specifically benefit the required curriculum for that year; for example, a language arts segment that discusses a literary work that is first read and then analyzed. Related vocabulary could be explored and a paper written that uses the skills discussed and demonstrates the application and understanding of the skills.

18) The program should attempt to recognize individual strengths and pursue individual interests for a set period of time with opportunity for more self-expression.

19) The curriculum could be elaborated and not structured like a

classroom situation. The aspect of self-evaluation is beneficial if the proper criteria are given. It should be an enriching experience which can be applied both inside and outside of the education realm.

20) The gifted and talented program should be expanded into full-time academic classrooms as well as what is being provided now. These students need such a program in order to keep them mentally stimulated to continue learning the "basics". The regular classroom normally does not accomplish this, because of the teacher/student ratio. The teacher has just so much time to allot to individual needs and priorities are usually geared toward the student who is behind or is having emotional problems. The student who usually does well is a blessing and does not require extra teacher-guided time, except to provide extra work. That is not enough. These students can learn so much, if given the proper training. It is a shame that time is being wasted.

21) The program should expand the child's interests. It should include things like interest in the world, government, health, and the earth, etc., and not frustrate him with assignments that will be covered in the regular classroom.

22) The curriculum should make some attempt to show relativity of what is being taught, i.e. keeping a journal to succeeding in life. Guest speakers (journalists) could be introduced and could stimulate some future reporters or writers. When working on creating character sketches, suggested reading of character sketches

should be given as examples before the task is assigned to the student or simultaneously, but not after the student has attempted the task and failed.

23) The curriculum is too structured.

24) The curriculum is too advanced for students.

When the students were asked about their feelings about the curriculum, they responded by identifying three parts of the curriculum they liked the most and three things about the curriculum they liked the least. The evaluator analyzed all the information and rank ordered the areas according to the number of times mentioned. The following is a list of the twenty areas of curriculum liked the most by the students responding to the questionnaire:

- 1) the content and subjects we study
- 2) the logic puzzles and mind benders
- 3) dissecting different kinds of things
- 4) going on field trips
- 5) creativity activities
- 6) working in small groups
- 7) evaluating our work ourselves
- 8) questions and problems with no right answer
- 9) science experiments
- 10) learning new words
- 11) creative writing
- 12) choosing some of the activities we do

- 13) actually "doing" things
- 14) independent activities
- 15) more challenging activities
- 16) projects
- 17) different types of thinking
- 18) teachers
- 19) classmates
- 20) longer time

The evaluator also felt it necessary to include a list of the areas that the students liked the least:

- 1) journals
- 2) projects
- 3) too many people
- 4) don't have a classroom in which to work
- 5) doing advertisements
- 6) research
- 7) not having physical education periods
- 8) mixed grade levels
- 9) missing things in the classroom
- 10) writing so much
- 11) Think Lab
- 12) homework
- 13) mythology stories
- 14) puzzles

- 15) work is too hard
- 16) too much work to do
- 17) not enough time
- 18) not enough math activities
- 19) looking up words in the dictionary

Communication

Another key feature that was investigated by the questionnaires was communication. Communication is one of the keys to effective programs for gifted and talented students. All persons directly or indirectly involved in programs for gifted and talented students need to have an understanding of what is happening with the program.

Parents were asked if they felt that they had been provided with enough information about the program. Three hundred and ninety-eight or sixty-seven percent of the parents responding to the questionnaires felt that there was enough or adequate communication about the program. One hundred and fifty-three or twenty-six percent of the parents responding did not feel that the communication provided during the year was enough to know what was happening in the program. Thirty or five percent of the parents made no comments about the communication techniques at all. The remaining eleven or two percent of the parents felt there had been some communication but would like to have had more information about the program.

Table 3

Parent Response About Communication

	Good or adequate	Not enough	Some	No comments
Parents	67%	26%	5%	2%

The parents were also given a choice of communication tools and asked to rate them according to which would be the most effective. Parents selected newsletters as being the most effective form of communication. (One hundred and seventy-nine or thirty percent of the parents responding selected newsletters.) Almost as popular as newsletters were regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences. (One hundred and sixty-four or twenty-eight percent of the parents ranked it as the most effective.) The next form selected was individual parent-teacher letters explaining the activities that are conducted in the classroom. (One hundred and nineteen or nineteen percent.) Scheduled, quarterly parent meetings were ranked next. (Eighty-four or fourteen percent of the parents.) Telephone conferences were not selected by many of the parents. (Only forty-nine or eight percent.) The other one percent of the parents responding to the survey added their own suggestions--seeing children's work and conversations with the children themselves.

Table 4
Tools For More Effective Communication
(Order of Selection)

Newsletters
Regular scheduled parent-teacher conferences
Individual parent-teacher letters
Scheduled quarterly parent meetings
Telephone conversations
Seeing children's work
Conversations with child

Nonprogram or classroom teachers were also asked about communication and if they felt they were adequately informed about the program for gifted and talented students. They were also asked for their suggestions and ideas for improving the communication between program and nonprogram teachers. One hundred and twenty-four or sixty-one percent of the classroom teachers felt they were adequately informed. This was a very positive response because during the interviews every representative of the prime interest groups listed public relations or communication as the problem area which they felt the most concern about and needed the most improvement. Thirty-four percent or sixty-nine of the teachers felt that there was not enough communication given about what was happening in the program. Six teachers or three percent responding to the survey felt that the communication was adequate

some of the time. Only four or two percent of the classroom teachers made no comments at all.

Table 5
Classroom Teachers Response About Communication

	Good or adequate	Not enough	Some	No comments
Classroom Teachers	61%	34%	3%	2%

Identified gifted and talented students and program teachers were not asked their opinions on communication. The evaluator felt that the students were not as aware of public relations as parents and classroom teachers. Program teachers were not the recipients of the communication and could not effectively judge whether it was adequate or not.

Overall Effectiveness of Program

A third key feature examined in the study was how each prime interest group viewed the overall effectiveness of the program. The parents were asked their opinion of the program from the viewpoint of their children's general attitudes about being in the program. Sixty-two percent or three hundred and sixty-seven of the parents responding to the survey felt their children were enthusiastic about

being in the program. Thirty-two percent or one hundred and eighty-nine felt positive about the program. So a total of ninety-four percent of the parents rated their children's attitude toward the program favorably. Only five percent or thirty parents checked that their children were indifferent. As few as six or one percent of the parents rated their children as feeling negative. An overwhelming amount of positive feelings toward the program was indicated in this part of the questionnaire.

Table 6

Parent Response About The Overall Effectiveness of the Program

Enthusiastic	Positive	Indifferent	Negative
62%	32%	5%	1%

The phrasing of the same question for classroom or nonresource program teachers was a little different. They were asked to rate the overall effectiveness of the program in meeting the needs of the gifted and talented students, since that is a primary goal of the program. Twenty-nine percent or fifty-nine of the classroom teachers rated the program as excellent. The program was rated good by fifty-seven percent or one hundred and sixteen of the teachers. Therefore, eighty-six percent of nonprogram teachers rated the overall

effectiveness of the program favorably. Eight and one half percent or seventeen teachers felt the program was poor. Five and one half percent or eleven teachers made no comments of this particular question.

Table 7

Classroom Teacher Response About The Overall Effectiveness
of the Program

Excellent	Good	Poor	No Comments
29%	57%	8½%	5½%

Students rated the effectiveness of the program by answering whether they felt the program had helped them academically or not. Six hundred and sixteen or ninety percent of the students felt the program had helped them in their other school work. One and one half percent or eleven students responding to the survey felt they had been helped some, while eight and one half percent or fifty-three of the students felt the program had not helped them academically. Again, it seemed that the students felt very positive about the overall effects the program has had on their academic endeavors.

Table 8

Student Response About The Overall Effectiveness of the Program

Helped Academically	Helped Some	Did Not Help Academically
90%	1½%	8½%

The program teachers were asked how they felt about the overall effectiveness of the program. Six of the ten teachers returning their questionnaires (sixty percent) felt the program as a whole was very effective in helping gifted and talented students reach their potential. One teacher felt she could not possibly answer the question honestly. One of the teachers felt she could only rate the program as fair because of lack of support from some of the principals. One teacher felt it was difficult to have much impact on developing students' thinking processes in the small amount of contact time with the students. One other teacher felt that the program was fighting a losing battle because of the small amount of contact with the identified students and often the negation of what was being taught in the gifted and talented program by classroom teachers.

It seems that parents, nonprogram teachers, and students are much more positive about the overall effectiveness of the gifted and talented program than are the resource teachers actually involved

in the program.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Program

The next key feature is the extremely important area of strengths and weaknesses as perceived by the various prime interest groups. This was a narrative response question. For each prime interest group, the strengths and weaknesses reported will be listed separately, and those that were mentioned most often will be the ones that are recorded.

The parents were asked to explain what they felt were the strengths of the program. The weaknesses were included later in a question about specific changes needed in the program's operation, that will be included in the key feature called changes needed.

1) Children are taken into ideas and concepts as well as subjects which are new to them and to which they would not otherwise be exposed for some time.

2) Good and caring teachers.

3) Extra incentive for children who are bored with regular classwork.

4) Opportunity for interaction between better students.

5) Development of higher cognitive processes.

6) Greater challenges.

7) Encouragement of individual thinking and critical thinking.

8) Variety and seriousness of the work.

- 9) Outlet for creativity.
- 10) Topics can be followed in more depth.
- 11) Minds are stretched.
- 12) Large variety of hands-on experience.
- 13) Just having the program.
- 14) Meeting the needs of these children which cannot be met in the classroom.
- 15) Creating enthusiasm in the students.
- 16) Enthusiastic staff.
- 17) Positive atmosphere created.
- 18) Experiments with different types of learning and teaching.
- 19) Well rounded curriculum design.
- 20) Working with a child's strengths, rather than concentration on weaknesses.
- 21) Applying learning to the "real" world.
- 22) Not being as concerned about the product or end goal, but allowing them to develop through a more innovative process.
- 23) Diversity of experiences offered.
- 24) Challenge to children to think, not to memorize.
- 25) Smaller classes.

Program teachers (resource teachers of the gifted and talented students) were also asked to identify what they thought were the strongest aspects of the program and what they felt were the chief weaknesses.

Strongest aspects of the program were:

- 1) Qualified teachers.
- 2) Freedom to design own curriculum.
- 3) Freedom to be individualistic in teaching approaches.
- 4) Student-teacher relationships.
- 5) Flexibility.
- 6) Opportunity to work in greater depth.
- 7) Smaller groups.
- 8) Interaction of students with others of similar abilities and talents.
- 9) Diverse curriculum with emphasis on creativity.
- 10) Promotion of reasoning, intellectual development, and higher level thought processes.

Weaknesses identified by the program teachers were:

- 1) Overworked staff.
- 2) Lack of adequate space to conduct classes.
- 3) Lack of adequate materials.
- 4) Some principals not understanding, cooperating, or supporting the program.
- 5) Lack of funding.
- 6) Scheduling.
- 7) Class size has increased too much.
- 8) Lack of authority for director to affect changes.
- 9) Wearing too many hats.

10) Communication problems.

11) Lack of understanding of gifted students and their needs from those not in the program.

Suggested Changes for Program

The most important key feature and the most beneficial in helping the staff to make improvements in the program for gifted and talented students is the changes that have been suggested. All of the prime interest groups were questioned about this particular area. It is hoped that many of these suggestions can be incorporated into the program in the future. Some of the suggestions made were the same for all the groups surveyed and interviewed. Two hundred and eighty-three or forty-eight percent of the parents responding felt that the Greensboro Gifted and Talented Program was fine as it was and did not need to make any changes. Eighty-two or fourteen percent of the parents responding to the interviews wanted more time made available for the students, preferably a full-time five-day-a-week program. On the other hand, ten parents or two percent felt that the program should have the students for less time than the present one-day-a-week program offerings.

Other important suggestions for changes from the parents were:

- 1) No multi-aging; keep the students separated by grade levels.
- 2) Some kind of student evaluation, e.g., report card.
- 3) More effective communication of activities to parents.

4) More field experiences, such as plays; visits to the Natural Science Center (more in-depth participation), farms, businesses, etc. to learn how they are run (real aspects of life).

5) More curriculum planning in conjunction with classroom teachers, so the curriculum corresponds more.

6) Better space should be made available. Students should not have to meet in corners of libraries, stages, and hallways.

7) More specific instruction based on the interests of the children.

8) Recognition that the younger children in the program who are not as mature as the older ones are equally "gifted". Each process of the program should not be expected of each child equally, but each child should be dealt with specifically.

9) The program should take advantage of the opportunities that are available in the community.

10) Too much testing and retesting. One testing should be sufficient for the child to qualify for the program. If the child does not qualify for the program, then retesting should not be done.

11) Reduction or elimination of the classroom homework the gifted and talented students must do to make up missed work when they are attending gifted and talented classes.

12) Classroom teacher recommendations should be eliminated for identifying children to be placed in the program. This leaves too much to "matters of opinion" and is extremely unfair to the shy child.

13) Incorporation of more psychology, philosophy, and problem

solving. Emphasis should be placed on communication and positive mental attitudes.

14) The day the students are in the program should be divided between enrichment and academic acceleration in basic subject matter.

15) More emphasis on math and science.

16) Too much analyzing of children.

17) The name of the program should be changed to something less ego inflating.

18) Greater assistance in helping the child deal with the emotional and social challenges of participation in the gifted and talented program.

19) The program needs to give the students incentive to do more, at the same time helping to build their self-esteem rather than tearing it down.

20) The children need to have a clear idea of the goals of the program. Considerable frustration is expressed about not knowing where they are heading.

The nonresource or classroom teachers were also asked for their opinions about suggestions for changes in the program. Seventy-nine or thirty-nine percent of the teachers responding to the survey felt the program was fine as it was and sixty-two or thirty percent made no comments about changes. The remaining teachers made the following suggestions:

1) Selecting students from kindergarten may be premature. The

gifted and talented students entering first grade classrooms have failed to meet their daily responsibilities of completing tasks and of accepting and respecting the uniqueness of other students.

2) The need to emphasize the importance of contributions of all individuals to our total society.

3) More information on what is done by the gifted and talented students.

4) A trial program should be provided for those who test out on the border or slightly below gifted and talented minimum or who, in the opinion of their teacher of the previous year, could participate in the program. Then after a set period of time, like four weeks, the teacher of the gifted and talented could decide whether or not they could continue the program.

5) Work on the attitudes of the gifted and talented students.

6) Make it an assignment for the gifted and talented students to share what they are doing with their regular classroom.

7) Exercises with graphs, globes, and map skills.

8) The gifted and talented program should be more integrated with the regular classroom activities.

9) The entrance requirements should be based more on an individual's daily performance rather than how well he takes a test.

10) The students need a twenty or thirty minute physical education time where the teacher gets them out of their environment for some exercise and fresh air. This will help stimulate their minds and make

them feel more a part of a normal classroom.

11) The students should not be kept a whole day.

12) Certain facets are a little too "touchy" for children at this age; e.g., personal attacks in the form of peer evaluation that involve criticism too deep for anyone to handle, in my opinion.

13) Scheduled visitation to gifted classroom by regular classroom teacher.

14) Regularly held conferences between the classroom teacher and the teacher of gifted and talented students.

15) Not combining several grade levels at the same time.

16) The program should be extended to self-contained classrooms.

17) The gifted and talented program should be expanded to include the artistically talented as well as the academically talented.

18) First graders should be able to read before entering the gifted and talented program.

19) There should be some method of evaluating a child relative to performance in the program. Children who do not measure up to the other students should be removed from the program.

20) Provision of in-service workshops so classroom teachers can reinforce what is going on in the program in the classroom.

21) Suggestions should be given to classroom teachers regarding how to challenge the gifted and talented students in the regular classroom.

22) The name should be changed to something else.

23) The fragmentation of the day and week is a tremendous problem for all regular classroom teachers.

24) Retention of the good enthusiastic teachers; they make the difference.

25) The gifted and talented program should not duplicate regular classroom activities and projects.

26) The program should have activities that stretch the students' imagination and creativity.

27) Some kind of evaluation.

28) Once the child has been classified as gifted through every available instrument, he or she should remain in the program with the maintenance being supplied by the instructors.

29) Assignment of an adequate classroom instead of being shifted to undesirable areas of the school. The program should be provided for with regard to materials, supplies, and space.

The students were asked what they would change about the gifted and talented classes if they could. There were only five things that were mentioned. Ninety-one percent of the students did not want any changes to be made. The suggestions that were mentioned by the other nine percent were:

- 1) Would like to have a classroom for a place to meet.
- 2) Come every day.
- 3) Have physical education outside.
- 4) Not have to write in journals.

5) Have people in the class all the same age.

Resource teachers or the teachers of the gifted and talented students had some very helpful suggestions for changes in the program.

The following is a list of those suggestions:

1) Meet needs of wider variety of giftedness.

2) Smaller class size.

3) Serve fewer schools.

4) More support from co-ordinator.

5) Students at primary grades, especially first graders, served by consultants.

6) More money for materials.

7) Variety in students' schedule; i.e., one percent in self-contained classes; resource and consultant services for the other identified students.

8) Re-evaluation of screening instruments (too academic).

9) Support from principal and administration.

10) Provide in-service workshops to enlighten teachers and principals as to the characteristics and goals of giftedness.

11) Discontinue writing IEP's.

12) Bus children to central locations for instruction.

13) Hire someone to be in charge of testing or discontinue massive testing.

14) Equip gifted and talented classroom with the appropriate materials: resource books, supplies, space, decent furniture.

- 15) Planning time; time to meet with other teachers of gifted and talented.
- 16) Elimination of extra responsibilities (such as breakfast duty or bus duty) unless all school personnel are sharing this responsibility.
- 17) Systematic communication system.
- 18) Provisions for team teaching.
- 19) Raising the cut-off by one point.
- 20) Additional staff.
- 21) A means of evaluating student performance.

Other Information

Besides the five main key features discussed, the evaluator added several questions to the questionnaire that members of the prime interest groups had suggested at the earlier interviews. Besides what has already been mentioned, parents were asked if their children expressed any concern about missing work in the regular classroom or making up assignments because he/she is out of the room. Two hundred and thirteen or thirty-six percent of the parents responding said their children felt there was too much homework and pressure from being out of the classroom. This indicates enough concern by the parents that the staff might follow up and find out if there is something that can be done to alleviate the problem. Three hundred and fifty-five or sixty percent of the parents said that their children did not feel that there was too much homework

or missed assignments from the regular classroom. Twenty-four or four percent felt there were some problems with making up assignments.

Table 9
Parent Response About Making Up Assignments

Too much homework	Some	No problems with making up work
36%	4%	60%

The students themselves were asked if they were expected to make up assignments missed because they were taking part in the program. Three hundred and ninety-six and fifty-eight percent said yes, one hundred and eighty-two or twenty-seven percent replied no; while one hundred and two or fifteen percent said sometimes. It seems that the students themselves feel more pressure to make up missed assignments or homework than has been expressed to their parents.

Table 10
Student Response About Making Up Assignments

Yes	No	Sometimes
58%	27%	15%

Classroom or nonresource teachers were asked their opinions on the missed assignments and making up classwork in a different form. They were asked if they felt that the students involved in the program spent too much time in the class at the expense of their regular classwork. Eighty-six percent or one hundred and seventy-five of the classroom teachers responding did not feel that the students were missing too much from the regular classroom. Thirteen percent or twenty-six of the teachers did feel the students were away from the classroom too much and had a difficult time keeping up with their work. One half percent or one of the teachers said often, while one half percent or one of the teachers made no comments.

Table 11

Classroom Teacher Response About Making Up Assignments

Do not feel students miss too much	Do feel students miss too much	Often miss too much	No comments
86%	13%	$\frac{1}{2}\%$	$\frac{1}{2}\%$

Several other questions that were included in the student's questionnaire are important to consider. Students were asked if they were able to express their ideas freely in the gifted and talented class as compared to their regular classroom setting. There were

six hundred and nineteen or ninety-one percent of the students who said they were free to express their opinions. Thirty or four percent said that sometimes they felt the atmosphere was open enough to be uninhibited in their expressions and thoughts. Only thirty-one or five percent felt that they were not able to express themselves openly. This response reflects one of the positive aspects of the program.

Table 12
Student Response About Expressing Ideas Freely

Yes	Sometimes	No
91%	4%	5%

Along with freedom of expression of thoughts and feelings, students were asked if they were allowed to decide for themselves any of the activities or projects in the class. The program for gifted and talented students tries to emphasize the part of the students in the planning of their classwork. Ninety percent or six hundred and sixteen of the students responding said they felt they were included in the planning and deciding what activities in which they would be involved. Eleven or eight percent felt they were involved some of

the time, while only two percent or eleven students did not feel they were allowed to be involved in the decisions at all.

Table 13
Student Response About Involvement In Planning

Most of the time	Some of the time	Not at all
90%	8%	2%

Another problem that some students encounter while they are involved in a gifted and talented resource program is the resentment from students who are not in the program. Attending a program one day a week means that the students have to leave the regular classroom, which makes their involvement in a special program more apparent than in a self-contained classroom. Four hundred and ninety-nine or seventy-three percent of the students said they had not encountered any problems with their friends due to being in the program. Two percent or seven students responded that some of the time, they encountered problems. One hundred and seventy-four or twenty-five percent of the students had many problems with their fellow classmates because of their involvement in the program.

Table 14

G/T Student Response About Problems With Non G/T Students

Have had problems with other students	Some problems with other students	No problems with other students
25%	2%	73%

The same question was posed to classroom teachers to see if they noticed any resentment from students not in the program towards the students that are in the program. Classroom teachers observed little resentment from other students toward gifted and talented students. One hundred and forty-eight or seventy-three percent said there was no resentment noticed and seven or three percent said the students were curious or interested about where these students went and what they did but were not resentful. Twelve percent or twenty-four teachers said there was some resentment while twenty-four or twelve percent said there was definitely resentment shown from students not identified for placement in the program.

Table 15

Teacher Response About Problems With Non G/T Students

Problems from other students	Some problems from other students	No problems from other students
12%	12%	76%

On the classroom teacher questionnaire, another question concerned the identification procedures. Since classroom teachers have input into two of the four screening measures used in the identification procedure, their opinions were especially important in this area. The question was two-fold. The first part was whether the teachers felt the identification procedures had selected the students who should be in the program. Sixty-six percent or one hundred and thirty-four teachers responding to the survey felt that the identification procedures had selected the right students to be in the program. Twenty-two percent or forty-five said no, that the procedures did not always select the appropriate students. Sixteen or eight percent said somewhat and three and one half percent or seven made no comments at all. One teacher (one half percent) added that some students were identified that should not have been.

Table 16
Teacher Response About Identification

Selected right students	Do not select right students	Sometimes selects right students	No Comments	Selects those who should not be in
66%	22%	8%	3½%	½%

The second part of the question asked if there were students who had been missed by the procedures and should have been placed in the program. One hundred and eighteen or fifty-eight percent of those responding to the survey said that students needing the services of the gifted and talented program were being missed. Sixteen or eight percent said they felt some were being missed that should have been placed in the program. Sixty-one or thirty percent said that there were not any students being missed while eight teachers or four percent made no comments at all. The responses from both parts of this question should cause some concern about the adequacy of the identification procedures. There seems to be strong feelings from the classroom teachers (nonresource teachers) that they are not appropriate.

Table 17
Teacher Response About Identification

Students were being missed	Some students were being missed	No students were missed	No comments
58%	8%	30%	4%

Classroom teachers were also asked if they felt the process of selecting the students for the program was too demanding of their time. Eighty-five percent or one hundred and seventy-three teachers said that the selection process was not too demanding. Two teachers said that it was a little demanding but they understood how necessary the procedure was. Four teachers did not reply. Only twenty-four or twelve percent felt that it was too demanding and changes needed to be made.

Table 18
Teacher Response About How Demanding The Screening Is

Not too demanding	A little demanding	No reply	Too demanding
85%	1%	2%	12%

Since the resource teachers are actually working with the identified students, it was very important to ask them about the adequacy of the state-established procedures on identification. The question consisted of two parts. They were asked if the majority of their students were truly capable of superior performance. Six of the teachers (sixty percent) responded that most of their students were qualified to be in the program according to their performance. Two teachers (twenty percent) said that they felt about eighty-five percent of their class was truly gifted. Only two of the teachers (twenty percent) felt that their students were not performing and that the identification procedures had not adequately identified them.

Table 19

Resource Teacher Response About Identification Process

Identifies qualified students	Identifies some of the students	Does not adequately identify students
60%	20%	20%

The second part of the question was whether the teachers of the gifted and talented program felt that some students were missed with

the identification process. All of the teachers surveyed felt that some students who were really gifted were being kept out of the program with the screening procedures presently used. With this large number of teachers concerned with the identification procedures, it seems necessary that the process should be evaluated and perhaps changed to correct some of the problems.

One other need that teachers of gifted and talented felt was as important was some kind of in-service training in order to help them feel more prepared to work with gifted and talented students. In the questionnaire, the resource teachers were asked if there were enough in-service offerings to help them feel comfortable in working with gifted and talented students. Only two of the teachers felt they were offered enough in-service training. The other eight felt there were not enough workshops available for teachers of gifted and talented. One of the teachers also felt that in addition to in-service offerings for teachers of gifted and talented, there should also be in-service offerings on gifted education for regular classroom teachers and also administrators.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the purposes of this study was to investigate ways to evaluate programs for gifted and talented students. An established program for gifted and talented students must be periodically analyzed and evaluated to insure that it is meeting the needs of its population and test how effectively it is reaching the goals and objectives that were established for its initial operation. The examiner discussed five models that can be used for evaluation of educational programs.

The following models were studied and explained in the review of relevant literature: Stake's "Countenance" Model, Stufflebeam's CIPP Model, Provus' Discrepancy Model, Eash's Differential Model, and the Renzulli and Ward Diagnostic and Evaluative Scales for the Differential Education for the Gifted. The first three models were not developed specifically to be used when evaluating gifted and talented programs. Their organizational framework is broad enough, however, so that they could be used for this purpose.

Stake's "Countenance" Model calls for description and judgement. The evaluator is directed to describe conditions in the existing program before comparing them against standards in order to make a judgement. Specific roles are dictated to the evaluator so there

is very little flexibility.

Stufflebeam developed his CIPP Model to provide specific information for decision makers. The steps involved in making decisions are very difficult to follow in his model. Again, specific roles are assigned to the evaluator so there is very little flexibility allowed.

The Provus Discrepancy Model is very complex and difficult to understand and use. Anyone using this model for the purpose of evaluating education programs would have to have extensive training in order to apply it. The first four stages of the evaluation model utilizes formative evaluation, while the fifth and last stage uses summative evaluation. Provus' model dictates the role of the evaluator and lacks flexibility.

Eash's Differential Evaluation Model was designed specifically for new and innovative programs, and has been recommended for evaluating programs for gifted and talented students. One of the positive aspects of this model is that the evaluation is carried along a continuum. Every step or stage of the program is evaluated. This model is less specific for gifted and talented education than it is meant to be. It has more relevance to general educational evaluation than to programs for gifted and talented students.

The fifth model discussed was Renzulli and Ward's Diagnostic and Evaluative Scales for Differential Education for the Gifted.

It is a valuable guide for documenting the value of programs for gifted and talented students and evaluating their effectiveness. This model translates many theoretical concepts in program evaluation into a practical, useable plan. It is flexible enough that it can take into account the special problems and unique characteristics of gifted and talented students.

The evaluator modified the DESDEG model to complete an evaluation of the Greensboro Gifted and Talented Program. The main purpose of evaluating the program was to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the program from prime interest groups' input (those with direct or indirect involvement in the program).

Five concerns or key features were identified from the study of program documents, open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and actual observations of the program in progress. These were selected as the areas that needed concentration: curriculum, communication, overall effectiveness of program, strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for change. Questionnaires developed by the evaluator were used as means of gathering information. Written approval for conducting the survey was received from the principals of each of the twenty-seven first through sixth grade schools in the Greensboro City School system.

The response rate for the completion and return of the questionnaires was very high. Two hundred and three of the nonresource teachers or classroom teachers returned completed questionnaires for an eighty-

one percent response. Five hundred and ninety-two parents of identified students returned their completed questionnaires to the individual schools for an eighty-four percent response.

The student questionnaires were administered during an actual scheduled time when the students were involved in the gifted and talented resource program. Six hundred and eighty students who qualified for placement in the program completed the questionnaires for a ninety-seven percent response. There was also a high response rate from the resource teachers working in the program. Ten of the program teachers completed their questionnaires for a ninety percent response.

Chapter IV of the study consisted of a report of the findings organized around the key features that had been identified. The first key feature was the effectiveness of the curriculum provided for the gifted and talented students. Parents and students responded to this part of the questionnaire. From the results of the survey, the evaluator concluded that the present curriculum seems to be very effective. Parents were very strong in their feelings about the curriculum being very good. Only thirteen percent of the parents responding made comments other than strongly supportive of the curriculum. There were very few negative comments about the curriculum.

The students response was in narrative form. They listed areas of the curriculum that they liked the most and those they liked

the least. These areas were rank ordered and some of them were mentioned in the discussion of the findings.

Another key feature investigated by the questionnaires was communication. Communication is one of the most important areas in promoting any educational program. Parents and classroom teachers were asked to respond to this question, because they were the recipients of information on the program and better able to judge whether it was adequate in helping them understand the program's operation. Parents and classroom teachers rated the adequacy of the communication process about the same. Sixty-seven percent of the parents and sixty-one percent of the classroom teachers felt the communication was adequate or good. Twenty-six percent of the parents and thirty-four percent of the classroom teachers felt the present means of communication were not informative enough. The evaluator feels that this is not an overwhelming amount of concern, but enough to warrant the staff of the gifted and talented program to examine closely the means of communication being presently used and make some changes. Parents ranked some communication techniques that they felt would be effective in helping them understand the program. These communication techniques are described in Chapter IV of this study.

A third key feature examined in the study was how the prime interest groups viewed the overall effectiveness of the program. This was one of the most important questions of the entire study. The evaluator concluded that according to the surveys, the program

is very effective overall in meeting the needs of gifted and talented students. This area of the survey was extremely positive. Ninety-four percent of the parents felt their children were enthusiastic or positive about their involvement in the program. Classroom teachers also rated the overall effectiveness of the program favorably--eighty-six percent rated the program as excellent or good. Students rated the effectiveness of the program by answering whether they felt the program had helped them academically or not. Ninety percent of the students felt the program had been very effective in helping them academically. Program teachers (those actually teaching the gifted and talented children) were asked how they felt about the overall effectiveness of the program. They were much harder on the program than those groups indirectly involved with its operation. Only sixty percent felt the program as a whole was helping the students reach their potential.

The next key feature examined was the strengths and weaknesses of the program. It was necessary for this question to be answered in narrative form. The evaluator reported in the findings some of the strengths and weaknesses of the program as mentioned by the parents and program teachers.

The last key feature that was discussed in the study was suggested changes for the program to be used in future planning. All of the prime interest groups were asked this question, which was written in order to elicit a narrative response. The evaluator

has listed as many of those suggestions as was feasible in the amount of space available. This study will be shared with the administrative staff and the gifted and talented staff of the Greensboro City Public School system. It is the hope of the evaluator that the suggestions will be carefully examined and analyzed and those that will benefit the program and can realistically be implemented will be used.

Besides the five main key features discussed, a few of the other questions were considered that were of importance in the operation of the program. One area was the concern from the various groups over children missing work in the regular classroom and having to make it up either through homework or at a later date. There was quite a discrepancy between how the parents felt about the assignments being made up and how the students themselves felt. Only forty percent of the parents but seventy-three percent of the students felt there was too much work to be made up. Again, this seems to be large enough to cause concern. Both classroom teachers and program teachers need to examine this problem and look for solutions to relieve some of the pressure from the identified students. Eighty-six percent of the classroom teachers did not indicate that the students were missing too much when they were out of the classroom. So if the students are not missing too much, then there should not be such pressure for making up the work.

Students were also asked if they were able to express their thoughts and ideas freely in the gifted and talented classroom and if they were

involved in any of the class planning. Both of these responses were very positive. Ninety-one percent felt they could express themselves freely and ninety percent felt they were involved in class planning most of the time.

Another area of concern was the attitude of students not in the program towards those that are in the program. Both students and classroom teachers were asked to respond to this question. Seventy-three percent of the students and seventy-six percent of the classroom teachers did not feel there were any problems from students not in the program. This was very encouraging. It was a positive note to know that the program had not isolated the students involved from the educational mainstream to the point of causing them problems.

Identification of gifted and talented students has always been a controversial area of the program. Response to this question came from classroom teachers and program teachers. Sixty-six percent of the classroom teachers felt that the screening procedures were selecting the right students but fifty-eight percent felt that there were many students being missed. Resource teachers felt about the same way. Sixty percent of those responding to the survey felt the process identified qualified students. Twelve percent of the classroom teachers felt that the entire identification procedure was too demanding of their time. The evaluator concluded that the response to this question indicates problems with the present identification and screening process. Too many students seem to be missed, according to those involved. The staff of the gifted and talented program needs

to look at the procedures very carefully and see if any changes can be made that will improve the selection.

All in all the evaluator feels that Greensboro's Program for Gifted and Talented is a beneficial and very effective program, according to the input from prime interest groups. However, there could be improvements made in the program. This study should help to identify some of these changes.

Because the program had not been evaluated since its initial pilot stage, this evaluation was completely summative. The evaluator does not feel that summative evaluation has enough input into the program and its progress. A recommendation is made to include not only summative evaluation at the end of every two to three years, but also to include in the program guidelines completion of formative evaluations for the future.

Since evaluation has become such an important tool in the progress and effectiveness of educational programs, especially in special educational programs, more research needs to be done in the area of developing better and easier means of collecting data. It is very complex to evaluate programs using some of the models that are now in the literature. It is very difficult to find accurate data-collecting instruments to use with gifted and talented students. It is the hope of the evaluator that future researchers will be encouraged to pursue these possibilities, so other gifted and talented programs may have some kind of guide with which to evaluate their progress and effectiveness.

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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRES

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How often does this class meet? _____
2. What do you do in this class that is different from your other classes? _____

3. What 3 things do you like most about this class?

4. What 3 things do you like least about this class?

5. What would you change about this class if you could? _____

6. Are you able to express your ideas freely in this class? _____
7. Do you think this class has helped you academically? _____
How? _____

8. Are you allowed to decide for yourself any of the activities in this class? _____
9. Have you been expected to make up assignments missed because you are in this program? _____
10. Have you encountered any problems with your friends as a result of being involved in the Gifted Program? _____
If so, explain. _____

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

I have received approval to distribute this survey evaluating the Gifted and Talented Program in grades 1-6. This study is part of my dissertation on evaluation, but will also be used in making recommendations for improvement in the Program for Gifted and Talented. Please complete the survey and return to your child's G/T teacher by February 27. No names will be used in the study. Your cooperation and interest will be appreciated.

Thank you,
Judy Rierson, G/T Program
288-5533

Grade Level: (Circle one) 1-3 or 4-6

1. Have you been provided enough information about the activities and experiences that your child pursues in the gifted program? _____

2. What form of communication would be most effective? (Check one)

- _____ Newsletters
 _____ Individual parent-teacher letters explaining activities
 _____ Regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference
 _____ Scheduled, quarterly parent meetings
 _____ Telephone conferences

3. Have you visited the gifted and talented classroom? _____

4. Which of the following comments best expresses your child's general attitude about the program?

- _____ Enthusiastic
 _____ Positive
 _____ Indifference
 _____ Negative

5. Has your child expressed a concern about missing work in the regular classroom or making up assignments because he/she is out of the room?

6. What do you regard as the strengths of the gifted program? _____

7. Do you have any specific changes that you would like to suggest in the operation of the program? _____

8. How do you feel about the curriculum for the program? _____

CLASSROOM TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

I have received approval to distribute this survey evaluating the Gifted and Talented Program in grades 1-6. This study is part of my dissertation on evaluation, but will also be used in making recommendations for improvement in the Program for Gifted and Talented in the future. Please complete the survey and return to the G/T teacher in your school by February 27. No names will be used in the study. Your cooperation and interest will be appreciated.

Thank you,
Judy Rierson, G/T Program
288-5533

Grade Level: (Circle one) 1-3 or 4-6

1. Do you feel students in the gifted program spend too much time on that class at the expense of their regular classwork? _____
2. Do you feel students not in the gifted program resent the students that are? _____
3. Do you feel the identification procedures have selected the students who should be in? _____ Do you feel some were missed? _____
4. Do you feel that you are adequately informed about the gifted program? _____ How could this be improved? _____
5. Does the scheduling of gifted classes cause inconvenience? _____
6. Have the students from your class in the gifted program shared their experiences with other members of the class? _____ Give examples:

7. Have you visited the classroom for the gifted? _____
8. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the gifted program in meeting the needs of the gifted children?
Excellent _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor _____
9. Do you feel student selection is too demanding of your time? _____
10. Do you have any specific suggestions for changes in the operation of the gifted program or the way it affects children? _____

GIFTED AND TALENTED TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Grade Level: (Circle one) 1-3 or 4-6

1. How often do you meet with your students? _____
2. What is your average class load? _____
3. How many schools do you serve? _____
4. Do you have access to materials, books, etc. that you need in working with these students? _____
5. Are the majority of your students truly capable of superior performance? _____ Do you feel you are working with students that should not be in the program? _____
6. Do you feel that you have enough input into establishing goals, objectives, identification procedures, and curriculum for the gifted program?

7. Identify what you perceive to be the strongest aspect of this program.

8. What do you perceive to be its chief weakness? _____
9. List changes you would make in this program if you could. _____

10. Do you feel that there is enough in-service offerings to help you feel comfortable in working with gifted students? _____
11. How do you feel about the overall effectiveness of the gifted program?

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE LETTERS FOR PERMISSION TO GATHER DATA



DIVISION OF PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES
DRAWER V — GREENSBORO, N. C. 27402

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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 21, 1980

To: Ms. Mary Hoyle, Director
Psychological Services

From: Ms. Judy Rierson
G/T Teacher ✓

As more and more special programs are developed in educational systems, there arises a need for some type of program evaluation. I am interested in completing my Doctoral Studies in Curriculum and Teaching at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro by doing my dissertation on Evaluating Programs for Gifted and Talented.

I would like permission to gather subjective data from parents, students in the program, classroom teachers and teachers of the gifted students through surveys and questionnaires in order to complete my study. (See attached examples- names will not be used).

After the study is complete, a formal written report will be shared with the administration of the Greensboro Public Schools upon request, as well as being submitted to UNC-G. I feel the study will be of benefit not only to the Gifted and Talented Program but also to our school system. The evaluation should discover whether and how effectively the objectives of our program are being fulfilled.

Thank you for your consideration.

/fm

cc: Mrs. Carolyn P. Eller
Mr. Frank Saunders
Mr. Melvin C. Swann, Jr.
Mr. Julius Fulmore
Mr. Dave Helberg
Dr. Kenneth Newbold

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 24, 1980
To: Elementary Principals
From: Carolyn Eller

One of our G/T teachers, Mrs. Judy Rierson, has received approval to distribute a survey or opinionnaire evaluating the G/T program in grades K-6. We would appreciate your help in getting this done from parents, teachers and students in your school. This study is part of Ms. Rierson's dissertation on evaluation but will help us in making recommendations for improvement in the Program for Gifted and Talented in the future.

Enclosed is a copy of Ms. Rierson's request in which she states the purpose of the study, questions to be asked and to whom the questionnaires are to go. The G/T teachers will distribute and collect the questionnaires.

We need only your written approval to proceed with the research. Please return the attached form to me at your earliest convenience. The project has been approved by Mr. Saunders, Mr. Helberg and Mr. Fulmore.

fm
cc: Mr. Frank Saunders
Mr. Melvin C. Swann, Jr.
Mr. Julius Fulmore
Mr. Dave Helberg
Mr. Dan Watkins
Ms. Judy Rierson

Name: W. E. House Date: 1-26-81

School: Jonesboro Research Study: G/T

I approve: ✓ I do not approve: _____

Conditions: Reasons:

Date: October 27, 1980

To: Dan Watkins, Research Studies

From: Judy Rierson, Teacher for Gifted and Talented Program

1. Purpose of study: Special programs for Gifted and Talented students have been mandated by the state of North Carolina under the Creech Bill. Even so, there is constant competition for the limited resources made available for all exceptional children's programs. Numerous educational programs have been introduced into school systems by means of special funding and they have seemed sound and exciting, but have been dropped or abandoned when the special funds ran out. Therefore, evaluation may be the very lifesaving tool for special programs. The purpose of my study is to do a theoretical analysis and description of a particular evaluation model and actually apply the model in completing an evaluation of Greensboro's Gifted and Talented Program.

2. Research Questions: 1) Are the objectives of Greensboro's Gifted and Talented Program being fulfilled? If so, how effectively?

2) What are some of the underlying policies and related activities that contribute to the success or failure of the program in particular areas?

3) How effective is the program according to prime interest groups (those with direct or indirect involvement in the program being evaluated—parents, teachers, students).

4) What are some patterns, trends, or discrepancies when comparing input from the various prime interest groups?

5) What are some of the areas of strengths and what are some of the areas that need improvement?

6) What are some realistic alternative courses of action for program modifications?

3. The questionnaires or surveys will be distributed to a particular population in the Greensboro Public School system. The population will consist of parents of identified gifted students, teachers and resource teachers of identified students and the identified students themselves. The information will be collected only in Grades 1-6.

4. The involvement of teachers and students will be to complete only the one survey form. Names will not be used.

5. Time needed for completing the surveys will be minimal. Students will complete their questionnaires while they are in the gifted and talented classes and will not need regular class time to complete.

6. There are no space requirements to complete my study nor any need for reimbursements.

APPENDIX C

LETTERS FOR INFORMATION TO COMPLETE STUDY

2210 Rheims Drive
Greensboro, North Carolina
October 10, 1980

Dr. Carolyn Callahan
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

Dear Dr. Callahan:

I am an itinerant teacher for the gifted and talented program in the Greensboro City School system. I have attended several workshops and conferences where you were speaking. I was especially interested in your presentation at the North Carolina PAGE meeting in Winston-Salem last spring.

Presently, I am involved in preparing my dissertation to complete my doctoral studies in Curriculum and Teaching at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. My topic is on the evaluation of our gifted and talented program here in Greensboro. I was very interested in using the Renzulli Model to gather my data. If you have any materials or information that would be helpful, I would appreciate seeing them. Have you actually used the model in evaluating other programs? If so, do you have any copies of the evaluation or know where I could locate them to study and refer to while working on my particular evaluation? I feel it is the most applicable model I have seen in my review of the research literature.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Thank you,

Judy Rierson



DEPARTMENT OF FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION
CURRY MEMORIAL SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

October 24, 1980


Ms. Judy Rierson
2210 Rheims Drive
Greensboro, North Carolina 27407

Dear Ms. Rierson:

The "Key Features Model" which I described at the PAGE Conference is derived from a book by Joseph S. Renzulli entitled A Guidebook for Evaluating Programs for the Gifted and Talented (a publication of the N/S-LTI-G/T, Suite PH-C, Civic Center Tower Building, 316 West Second Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012). The system is also described in the most recent NSSE Yearbook on the gifted in an article by Smith and Renzulli entitled "Issues and Procedures in Evaluating Programs for the Gifted."

I have used the model to evaluate several programs for the gifted. Perhaps the most extensive application of the model was in the evaluation of a Title IV-C project here in Charlottesville. The evaluation reports (3) are quite long, 100-250 pages. If you would like all or portions of those reports, I can make them available to you at cost of xeroxing. I also have 2 other "plans to evaluate" which used the model in a more restrictive sense. Again, I can provide these at the cost of reproduction. Let me know which, if any, of the above you would like.

Sincerely,

Carolyn M. Callahan
Carolyn M. Callahan 

cg