The Curious Legacy of Acceleration in Gifted Education

Presented by
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The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development
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A Nation Deceived
http://www.nationdeceived.org
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- Time Magazine
- Education Week
- New York Times
- Boston Globe
- Radio Shows
- International Media
- 42 Keynotes
- Evaluation in progress

The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development
A Nation Deceived

• Website: www.NationDeceived.org

• Visits → 1,433,989
• Downloads → 59,293
• Print copies → 35,000
Definitions

“Progress through an educational program at rates faster or at ages younger than conventional.”

(Pressey, 1949)

“… to provide an appropriate level of challenge, and to reduce the time period necessary for students to complete traditional schooling.”

National Association for Gifted Children
Position Paper 11/92
“Help students learn only what they don’t already know.”

Julian C. Stanley

“Acceleration is about children, not statistics.”

Templeton Report
Types of Acceleration

• Report identifies 18 types of acceleration.
Types: Subject-Based Acceleration

Provides student advanced content, skills and understandings before expected age or grade level

- Single-subject acceleration
- Compacted curriculum
- Distance learning
- Talent search programs
- Independent study/Mentoring
- AP courses
Types:
Grade-Based Acceleration

Shortens the number of years a student remains in the K-12 school system
- Early entrance to kindergarten or first grade
- Grade skipping
- Multi-grade classrooms
- Grade telescoping (2 years in one)
- Early admission to college
Types of Acceleration

Individual Student
- Grade-Skipping
- Early Entrance
- Mentoring

Small Group
- Single-Subject Acceleration

Class
- AP
“No paradox is more striking than the inconsistency between research findings on acceleration and the failure of our society to reduce the time spent by superior students in formal education”

M.J. Gold

Education of the Intellectually Gifted (1965)
“Acceleration is one of the most curious phenomena in the field of education. The research on acceleration is so uniformly positive, the benefits of appropriate acceleration so unequivocal, that it is difficult to see how our educators could oppose it.”

James H. Borland
Teachers College, Columbia University (1989)
“There is little doubt that educators have been largely negative about the practice of acceleration despite abundant research evidence attesting to its viability. It is difficult to understand the hostility of many educators to this acceleration strategy”

James J. Gallagher
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
Nation Deceived Vol. II (2004)
Meta-Analytic Studies of Acceleration

“Meta-analytic reviews have consistently concluded that educational acceleration helps students academically without shortchanging them socially and emotionally.”

James A. Kulik
The University of Michigan
“No other arrangement for gifted children works as well as acceleration.”

James A. Kulik
The University of Michigan
A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America’s Brightest Students

The main difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has limits
“You play favorites — you give the best grades to the kids who study!”
“The studies reported here provide educational decision-makers with a large, research-supported menu of accelerative options that may result in significant academic achievement for gifted learners.”

Karen B. Rogers
The University of St Thomas (Minnesota)
“None of the options has been shown to do psychosocial damage to gifted students as a group; when effects are noted, they are usually (but not invariably) in a positive direction.”

Nancy M. Robinson
University of Washington
Long-Term Effects

“Adult surveys of gifted individuals reveal that they do not regret their acceleration. Rather, they regret not having accelerated more.”

(Lubinski, Webb, et al., 2001)
“Practically every reviewer of this literature [early entrance to school] has weighed in favorably about the practice of permitting early entrance, but invariably with caveats.”

Nancy M. Robinson
University of Washington
“Not only was academic achievement more positive for the grade skipped learners, but also their social adjustment and academic self-esteem were more positive.”

Karen B. Rogers
University of St Thomas (Minnesota)
Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS)

- Instrument to help schools make effective decisions regarding a grade-skip.
- The IAS and manual (2nd edition) are available from Great Potential Press
- http://www.giftedbooks.com
Advanced Placement (AP)

“Those who did participate [in AP] more frequently expressed satisfaction with the intellectual caliber of their high school experience, compared with those who did not.”

(Bleske-Recheck, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2004)
“Clearly, the research on groups of early entrants … strongly suggests that many of [the students] were highly successful academically without experiencing concomitant social or emotional difficulties.”

Linda E. Brody, Michelle C. Muratori, & Julian C. Stanley
Johns Hopkins University
3 Most Difficult Decisions

- Early entrance to school
- Grade-skipping
- Early entrance to college

Lower in Difficulty
- Subject-matter acceleration
- AP/IBP
- Dual enrolled in college courses
Decision-Making Factors: Policies on Acceleration

- Cost → Minimal
- Needed Personnel → None
- Research Evidence → Highly Positive
- Public Beliefs → Generally Negative
- Educator Views → Strongly Negative

James J. Gallagher
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
“Acceleration levels the playing field of opportunity because any cost to the family or school is minimal”

Nation Deceived (2004)
Why Do Schools Hold Back Our Brightest Students?

- Not aware of the research
- Does not fit with personal preferences / political agenda
- Colleges of Education
Why Do Schools Hold Back Our Brightest Students?

- Social / emotional adjustments
- Long-term effects
- Hurrying or pressuring children
- Status quo causes no harm

The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development
Goal of the Templeton National Report on Acceleration

Change conversations in schools about acceleration and gifted students.
A Nation Deceived At Age 1

• Online Survey:
  – 9 Questions
  – 1 Open-Ended Field for Comments
• Released Sept 20th, 2004
### Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gifted Ed Specialist</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrator</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>77</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>University Faculty/Staff</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
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<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2597</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Title of the Report is:

- Accurate and Provocative (n=1496)
- Unnecessarily Provocative (n=138)
- Neutral (n=51)
- A Different Title Should Have Been Used (n=55)

N=1740*

*Respondents who said they were not aware of the report did not complete the following items.
Overall Educational Impact

N=1739*

- Considerable Positive Impact (n=143)
- Some Positive Impact (n=731)
- No Noticeable Impact (n=860)
- A Negative Impact (n=5)
Changing attitudes and beliefs in a positive direction regarding acceleration?

N=1733*

- Yes (n=648) 41%
- No (n=374) 37%
- I Don't Know (n=711) 22%
Changing policies and procedures in a positive direction regarding acceleration?

N=1711*

- Yes (n=342)
- No (n=573)
- I Don't Know (n=796)
Impact On Educators Outside the Field

N=1735*

- Strong Positive Impact (n=18)
- Some Positive Impact (n=301)
- A Minimal Impact (n=890)
- Negative Impact (n=33)
- Don't Know (n=493)
Impact On Educators Within the Field

N=1741*

- Strong Positive Impact (n=494)
- Some Positive Impact (n=789)
- A Minimal Impact (n=187)
- Negative Impact (n=0)
- Don't Know (n=271)
N=1261 total comments

“Well done. We have cited the report as a key item in our district’s acceleration policy/procedures and find it instrumental.”
“Many times ‘proof’ that acceleration works is warranted by educators and the report is the perfect answer.”
Comments

“In our school district we encouraged every administrator to get a copy. We used it when we began to develop our policy for subject and grade acceleration and early entrance.”
Comments

“This has been one of the most useful publications that I’ve used for acceleration advocacy ever!”
Comments

“It puts the much-researched information on acceleration in an easy to use format, yet provides more in-depth documentation for those people who require it. I’m truly grateful for this report!!!”
Thank You

The results of the entire survey and a copy of *Nation Deceived* are available at:

http://www.nationdeceived.org