

Rising Tides: More Than a Metaphor for the Future of Gifted Education

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Energized by Concepts



Gifted Education has been
“energized” by concepts

- The 20th Century-
 - Eras of gifted education can be understood by the prevailing concept (compelling energy)

What is a Concept?



- Rationale (energy) for gifted education
- View that organizes our actions about gifted education
- View that helps a country/education system to act
- View that helps a culture integrate gifted education
- Has inherent constraint

What is a Constraint?



- Not an error but a limit (inherent limit)
- A limit that eventually defeats the positive of the concept
- Usually difficult to see the limit initially
 - The concept appears so compelling

Concepts to Vision



Gifted Education in the 20th century
has been “energized” by *concepts*

Gifted Education in the 21st century
must be “energized” by *vision*

What is Vision?



- Rationale (energy) for gifted education
- View that is at once enhancing of the individual with abilities and the community (society)
- View that is encompassing and enhancing
- Vision does not have inherent constraints

Rising Tides



- More than a metaphor
 - It is a *vision* for New Zealand in the 21st century

National Concepts that “*Drive*” Gifted Education



- Curiosity/Odd
 - 1900's – 1950's
 - Era of testing and classification
 - WWI and WWII

Constraints

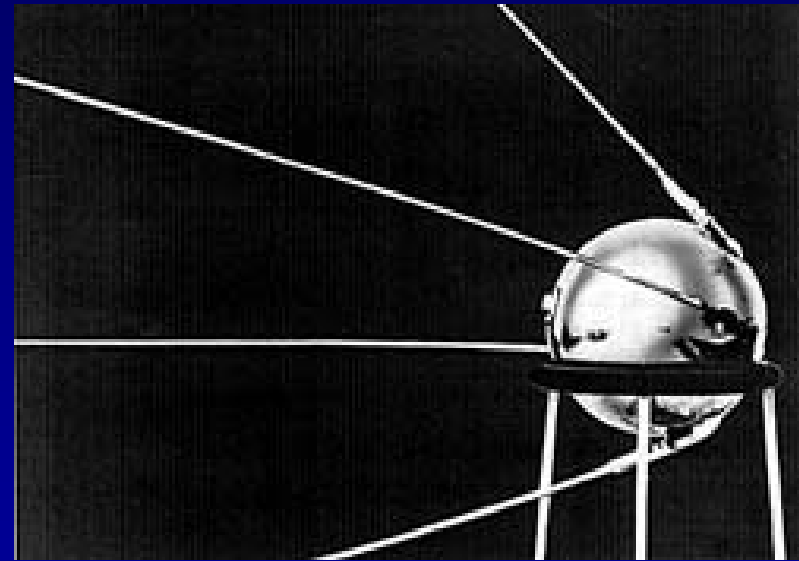


- Not a serious issue for the nation
- If they are healthy (Terman studies) then no need for attention
- Testing/IQ has limits

National Concepts that “*Drive*” Gifted Education



- National Security/Threat
 - 1957 – 1960's
 - October 4, 1957 – Sputnik
 - July 20, 1969 - Moon Landing



Constraints

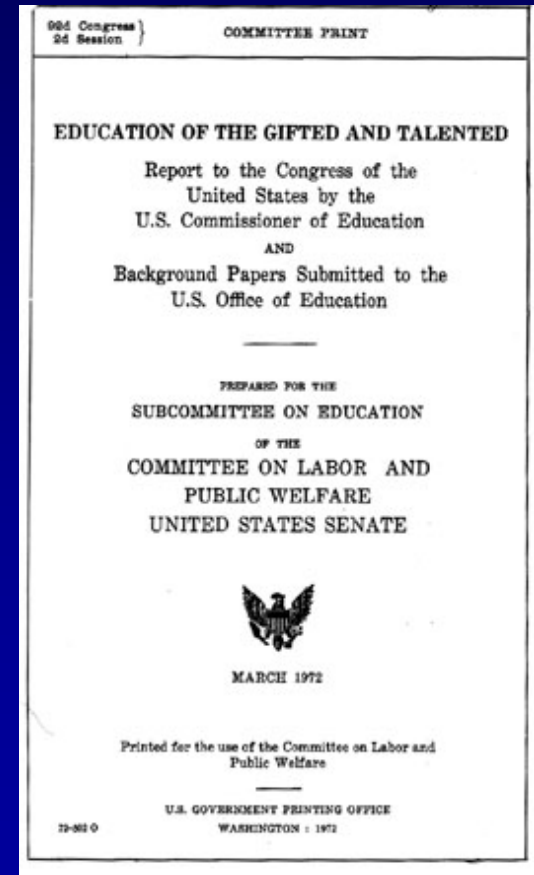


- Not planning, but reacting
- Only certain academic areas are important
- Not all military threats translate to academic energy (September 11, 2001)

National Concepts that “*Drive*” Gifted Education



- Natural Resource
 - 1970's
 - Marland Report – 1972
 - Discover Resources
 - Do Not Waste Resources



Constraints

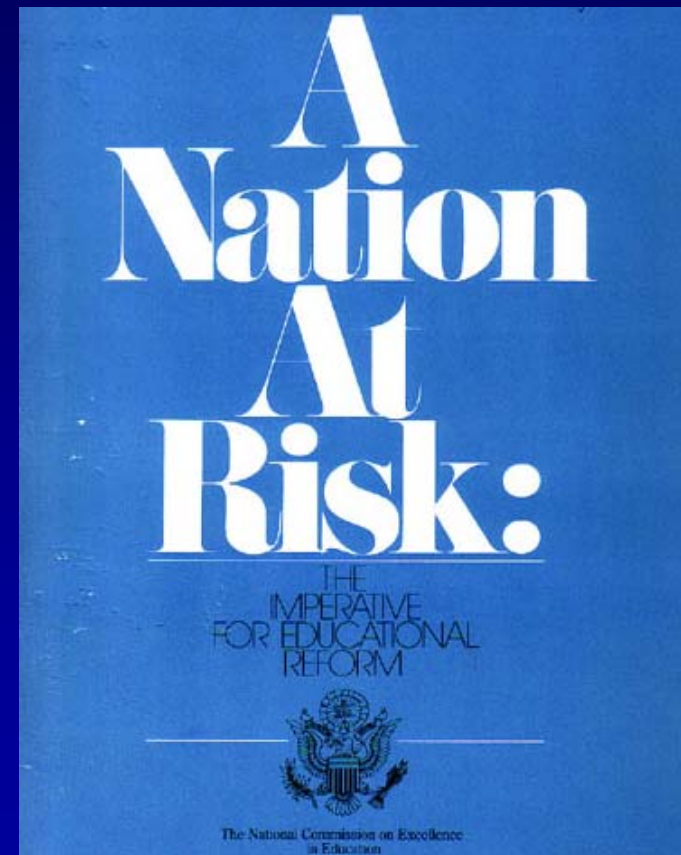


- The ability is more important than the child
- Children can be viewed as “minerals”
- Investment in resources must “pay off”

National Concepts that “*Drive*” Gifted Education



- Sports/Competition Models
 - Late 1970's - Early 1980's
 - Nation at Risk – 1983
 - Comparing and competing with students from other countries
 - World Standards



Constraints



- Winners and losers
- How many can be #1?
- Decisions about who will make you a winner
- Students from other countries are a threat

National Concepts that “*Drive*” Gifted Education



- Special Education/Exceptionality
 - Late 1980's - Early 1990's
 - IEP “mentality”
 - Looking to legal action
 - Understanding that giftedness is an exceptionalality
 - Recognition of twice-exceptional

Constraints

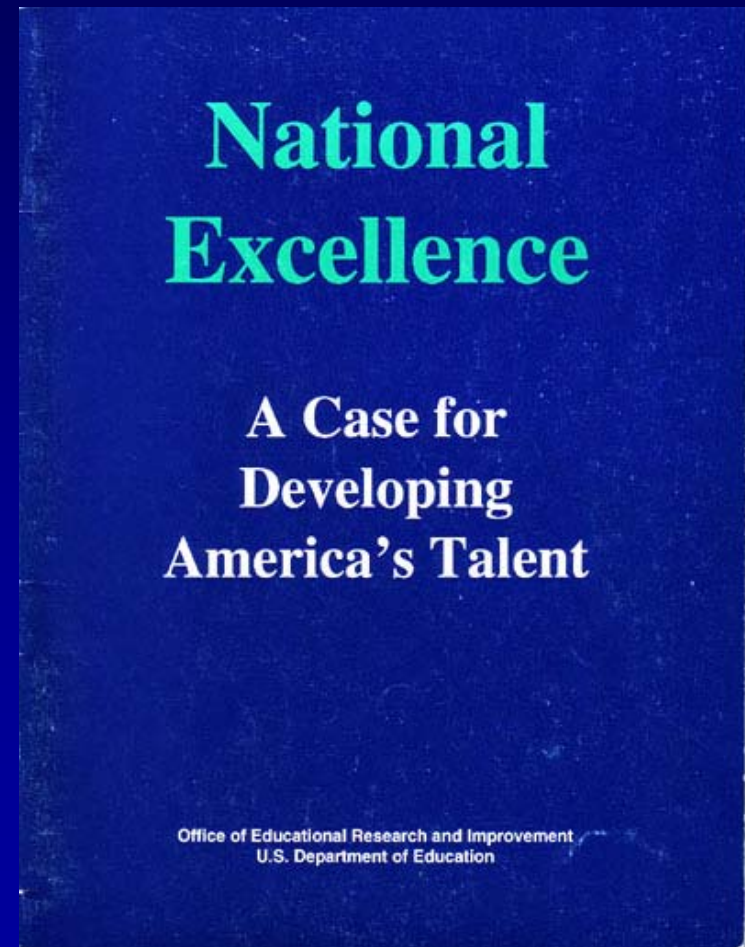


- Equating remediation with gifted education
- Legal action becomes a conflict mode
- Special education is high cost/high intensity
- Fighting to be “special”

National Concepts that “*Drive*” Gifted Education



- Equity
 - Early 1990's
 - Javits/Feds
 - 1993 National Excellence Report
 - View that equity is an issue in giftedness



Constraints



- Looking for the right number of kids for a program rather than the kids who are right for a program
- Differing standards for selection to programs
- Differences in numbers imply “wrongdoing”

National Concepts that “*Drive*” Gifted Education



- Victim/At-Risk
 - 1990's – 2000's
- Recognition of social & psychological barriers
- Recognition of gifted as invisible/at risk
- Strong political/ideological influence
- Gifted students as victims of anti-intellectualism in schools and society

Constraints



- Accentuate vulnerabilities
- Minimize individual responsibilities
- Build on the idea that one is a “patient” in need of care
- Society not as sympathetic towards gifted

National Concepts that “*Drive*” Gifted Education



- Talent Development
 - 21st Century
 - A new challenge for education
 - The purpose of education is to develop excellence

Vision



- Concept to Vision: Minimizing Constraint
 - One act leads to great enhancing consequences for the individual and society
 - Rising tides lift all vessels: More than a metaphor
 - First brush strokes for New Zealand's 21st century portrait

The root of excellence—from the Greek—is not, properly, to surpass others—or to be greater than them, but rather, to rise up naturally, to raise—as a crop is raised. The oldest root in the word—from the Greek—is that for HILL. Imagine that hill. It was not placed on the landscape to make the prairie feel flat. It was not raised to make the sky tremble. Its job is to be a hill. We do not know why, but we know a hill-less world would be unbearable.

Jorie Graham
Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1996
The Dream of the Unified Field

Vision



- Concept to Vision: Minimizing Constraint
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