

**TRAINING ELEMENTS OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF GIFTED STUDENTS**

A Dissertation

by

LORI SAUNDERS BROUGHTON

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2004

Major Subject: Educational Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Training Elements of Elementary Teachers in Social and
Emotional Development of Gifted Students. (August 2004)

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Student needs are ever changing within today's classroom. Training elements for teachers must be adapted so that all students' individual needs are being met. Training offered by school districts must incorporate specific social and emotional topics that deal with the gifted and talented students' development.

This research project investigated various training options that elementary teachers have received by attending a six-clock-hour workshop when compared to those teachers who received thirty hours of university course work at the university graduate level. The study then determined the specific elements of training received, the topics necessary for implementation that are of a positive nature for students, and finally, qualities that teachers must possess and implement within the classroom in order to effectively meet the needs of social and emotional development for gifted students.

This study showed that training in the area of social and emotional development is crafted differently according to the trainer who is presenting the material. The respondents who were interviewed took various knowledge and applied it within the classroom based on student and professional needs. The notion that gifted students are

perfect seems to be the norm of thinking in the group of teachers who were used in this case study. The strategies used for classroom implementation are ones that most likely meet the cognitive domain and can be used as a form of assessment for the teacher's gradebook. The activities that will most likely benefit the emotional quality of a student's psyche are viewed to be ones that are not beneficial or easily implemented within the constraints of the classroom.

The need for social and emotional development is demonstrated by the vast amount of research and models as presented throughout this study. The study shows that much training is needed along with a classroom structure that is designed to help gifted students learn to deal with their intellect as well as with factors that seem to interrupt the intellectual label.

To my loving parents,
Lynn and Carolyn Saunders
who helped me realize my dreams,
believed in my intelligence,
helped me seek after those hard to reach goals,
stood beside me with words
of positive encouragement, and
pushed me to continue on my quest
of helping to make school a joy for children

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I have come to the realization that I must be in a learning environment in order to maintain my sense of purpose and direction. I began school in kindergarten and continued until I had received my Master's degree. Then I questioned my direction until I met Dr. Joyce Juntune. On a Saturday in Clear Creek Independent School District it became evident what path I must pursue. I attended the summer training at the Galveston campus affiliated with Texas A&M, and then during the winter holidays, I hastily made the necessary arrangements to drive to College Station and begin my dream of obtaining my next degree.

Joyce Juntune is a person of great enthusiasm and, most importantly, she is a visionary who knows what quality education must consist of in order to make the most impact on today's students. Her help and guidance through my studies and in writing this dissertation have been invaluable to me both professionally and personally.

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I am grateful to Char and Bill Larsen for the use of their cabin on Lake Buchanan in Burnet, Texas. The soothing sounds of the water and the birds chirping helped me to establish the peace I needed in order to bring this project to closure.

Thanks to my mother who has given me the strength and encouragement to pursue this dream. She was with me on the very day I set foot on the campus of A&M,

and is now proofreading and calling me once a week to ask how the final project is progressing. My parents have always been an inspiration to me. If not for them, I would not have had the encouragement to pursue any college preparatory program. Being a product of public schools, one which judged students merely by test results, I did not show the necessary qualifications to be a student pursuing higher education goals. Thanks to my mother and father, my educational goals and career have developed from a dream to become a reality.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Research Questions.....	5
Definitions of Terms.....	5
Limitations.....	7
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	8
Definitions of Giftedness.....	9
Student Related Issues.....	12
Asynchronous Development.....	13
Dabrowski's Overexcitabilities.....	14
Multipotentiality and Career Awareness.....	17
Family Issues.....	18
School Related Issues.....	20
Students in the Classroom.....	20
Classroom Management Concerns.....	21
Classroom Instruction Training.....	23
Cognitive Versus Affective Domain in the Classroom.....	24
Assessment Practices.....	25
Characteristics of Teachers.....	26
Counseling of the Gifted Student.....	28
Bibliotherapy.....	29
Programming Needs.....	30
Summary.....	32
CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY.....	34
Qualitative Research.....	34
Human Instrument.....	36
Subjects.....	36
Procedures.....	37
Document Search.....	38
Analysis of Data.....	39
Establishing Trustworthiness.....	41
Assumptions.....	45

	Page
Summary.....	45
CHAPTER IV PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS.....	47
The District.....	48
The Participants.....	53
The Interviews.....	55
Gifted and Talented Endorsement Participant #1.....	55
Gifted and Talented Endorsement Participant #2.....	61
Gifted and Talented Endorsement Participant #3.....	71
Gifted and Talented Endorsement Participant #4.....	77
Six Hour Workshop Participant #1.....	83
Six Hour Workshop Participant #2.....	90
Six Hour Workshop Participant #3.....	95
Six Hour Workshop Participant #4.....	100
Advanced Academic Specialist Interview.....	106
Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction.....	115
Campus Principal Interview.....	121
Closing.....	128
CHAPTER V DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS..	131
Emerging Themes.....	146
Areas that Need Attention.....	151
Conclusions and Implications.....	153
Recommendations for Future Studies.....	157
REFERENCES.....	160
APPENDIX A.....	170
APPENDIX B.....	174
APPENDIX C.....	176
VITA.....	183

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study is to determine whether or not there is a relationship between the amount of training and the level of classroom implementation of strategies in social and emotional development for gifted students. This project will determine if the training provides the necessary components associated with the affective domain. The study will also examine various topics covered in the training. A case study method will be used to report the findings of this project. The research project includes as specific objectives:

- A. To formulate a description of the training that is available for elementary school teachers of gifted and talented students in social and emotional development.
- B. To analyze the areas of impact that social and emotional development has on development based upon the State Plan as well as the school district's plan.
- C. To interpret the subject's responses to determine the types and impact of the training.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Social and Emotional Development along with academic concerns play a critical role in the development of a child. The higher the intelligence the more this interferes with the social and emotional development of a gifted individual. Silverman (2002) finds that, "gifted children are more advanced mentally than others of their chronological age,

Citations follow the style of *Roeper Review*

and most have disparities between their intellectual abilities (as indicated by mental age) and their physical abilities (closely aligned to chronological age)” (p. 31). This difference is noticeable within the classroom. Students labeled gifted are expected to behave like their age peers. Understanding the inherent makeup of a gifted student provides the educator with necessary strategies to understand and to better guide students.

The cognitive domain is an area of constant development in our schools. However, the affective domain is often not addressed when curriculum departments create plans of scope and sequences. The State Plan for gifted students in Texas addresses affective instruction in the area of nature and needs instruction, but only for districts pursuing an exemplary rating and only for the adults, who are assisting in the development of students or serving as mentors. (State Plan, 1996) “Mentors and others who offer specialized instruction for gifted/talented students are provided training to increase their understanding of the nature and needs of these students and the district goals for the program” (p.8).

Educators should become aware and more concerned about affective factors in learning and development. George Betts’ (1988) theoretical model ascertains developing programming areas in the affective domain most often associated with gifted students. “A comprehensive approach to differentiating instruction for the gifted must involve values, feelings, personal growth, and interpersonal relations” (Betts, 1986, p. 587). The medical field is also helping in identifying and perhaps with guidance in the realm of issues that are typical of gifted students. Robinson & Olszewski-Kubilius (1996) describe gifted students as “out of sync” (p.433).

After studying the last sixty years of research, Cross (2001) concluded that the term “needs” should be changed to “issue” (p. 9). This use of the word issue tends to provide perhaps a more positive connotation in this area of concern.

Delisle (2001) applauded the work that Linda Silverman (1990) compiled in regards to the ideas that Leta Stetter Hollingworth wrote about in the 1920's. Hollingworth (1922) showed the importance of the emotional lives of children. She urged the need for educators to consider both the emotional and the cognitive areas when instructing gifted students. She notes that “Schools cannot equalize children, schools can only equalize opportunity” (p. 298). Systematic attempts to understand social and emotional development have only recently been renewed (Horowitz, 1987; Campos, Barrett, Lamb, Goldsmith, & Sternberg, 1983).

Linda K. Silverman (1993) writes that “gifted children not only think differently from their peers, they also feel differently” (p. 3). She proposes that this comes from students experiencing asynchronous development. Teachers must be trained to understand the thought processes of the gifted and to amend basic curriculum to compliment the gifted student's ability to learn the use of their differences as an essential part of the development of their talent. The Columbus Group (1991) uses the idea that defining a gifted individual by not taking into account the external components, misses the point of what giftedness truly means (Morelock, 1992).

The work conducted by Dabrowski (1967) in regards to overexcitabilities (OE's) has since been explained further by Piechowski (1997). The knowledge of the OE's is also something that students need to be aware of so that they may form strategies in order to compensate for these reactions. As the research states, these OE's will never go away;

the person must learn to deal with these. Dabrowski's theory points out that the overexcitabilities "are part of the inherent makeup of the gifted, creative individual" (Bouchet & Falk, 2001, p. 260).

Counseling issues become critical components in programming needs for the gifted student. The teacher in a classroom may group students according to the issues that exhibit characteristics and are in need of support. This classroom support group can become a source for gifted students where they feel free and express their fears, questions, and concerns about themselves. Colangelo (1993) commented on feedback of students that had this specific type of support, "I never knew anyone else felt like that --- thought like that" (p. 114).

Family issues also become a factor in the classroom. These issues will find their way into parent teacher conferences when the parent wants the teacher to help them understand what lies ahead for their child in his/her educational pursuit. Peterson (1977) noted ways in which a gifted child may impact the family structure. Hackney (1981) states "competition among family members; sibling jealousy; insensitivity to each member's unique sense of giftedness; and lack of respect for each member's differences" make for unique family problems when raising a gifted individual (p. 51). Hackney also noted in the research that one overlying question from parents is how far does a family need to adapt in order to meet the needs of their gifted child?

The need to provide affective education must become an important and critical component of the gifted program. Goals of all gifted programs should be to build strong affective domain foundations for the pursuit of knowledge for the gifted students. In the words of William James, "Students who feel good about themselves as human beings, not

just scholars, grow up to become ‘Effective geniuses’: young people in touch with both their hearts and their minds, adults as willing and able to *care* deeply as to *think* deeply” (Delisle, 1992, p. 67).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study will look at the amount of training and classroom implementation of strategies for student activities within the classroom. The results of the research will guide teachers, counselors, and school administrators in providing programming options for gifted students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will be guided by the following questions:

1. What specific training opportunities have the educators of the gifted taken?
2. What components of this training have been utilized in the classroom and are regarded as necessary in the development of social and emotional issues?
3. How has the training impacted the types of lessons that the teacher prepares when differentiating for the gifted students?
4. What areas of social and emotional development training has been too time consuming for the classroom teacher to utilize in the regular classroom?
5. What characteristics of the educator does school administration seek when assigning teachers to the identified gifted and talented students?

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Awareness Hours – This training mandated through the Texas Administrative Code (19 TAC §89.2(1)) for teachers assigned gifted students. This training has three components,

one of which is six hours of nature and needs. Different institutions and districts define this component of Nature and Needs and offer various topics, not necessarily as specific in the social and emotional development.

Bibliotherapy – A technique to use literature to help gifted and talented students “discuss and develop alternative approaches for meeting their special challenges and problems” (Frasier & McCannon, 1981, p. 81).

Gifted Endorsement – State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) requires fifteen credit hours to obtain a gifted and talented endorsement.

Member Checks – Verifying data within the confines of the members of the study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993).

Mentorship – providing the gifted student with a role model/mentor to guide the young gifted individual in the development of their own passions. The mentor can also model the ability to live and work with passion (Silverman, 1993).

Overexciteabilities (OEs) – The term is explained to respond with greater intensity to various stimuli. Individuals have the abundance of physical, sensual, creative, intellectual, and emotional energy. The strength of these areas are most exhibited in the areas of imaginal, intellectual, and emotional (Silverman, 1993).

Prolonged Engagement - Time spent by the researcher to develop an understanding of the culture and to build upon the trust needed from the respondents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Support Groups – The setting where gifted students meet and discuss topics that will improve their self perceptions and also relationships with others (Colangelo, 1991).

Trustworthiness – Including the components in the study that measure the internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity criteria (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

LIMITATIONS

A goal of this study is to provide a description of the training received by educators and to determine if the training has adequately prepared the educator to provide a substantial and positive foundation to best serve gifted students in the classroom setting. The findings may result in schools offering different training choices, programming options, and staff assignments to provide for sound social and emotional development in an elementary school gifted program. The results of this study cannot be generalized to the general population, but may prove helpful to individual schools and districts providing training of teachers of the gifted.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Each school day, school bells across our nation toll signaling yet another day of opportunity for students. They enter school buildings to learn new information, to resolve issues, and hopefully, to formulate doubts and curiosities about various subjects that touch their individual passions that may one day change all of our lives. As educators, we are challenged to ensure that this quest of curiosity will infuse within each individual mind and will initiate a bouncing, electric conceptualization of a new idea. It is these future unheard of ideas that hover in the minds of today's children, and they are most often discovered in the thinking of our gifted students. We must learn to gear our programs so that education offers curriculum that specifically challenges our gifted students in a positive manner while it frees their initiatives to explore, to create, to walk down new roads and to change paradigms. Only through empathetic, informed, and wise teaching can we approach blending our cognitive-based curriculums with a nurturing program designed to bring success to those who are gifted.

Teachers are charged to help create a path for every child under his/her direction in the classroom. The task is to motivate students, to provide relevance to the material taught, and to adhere to the state's mandated curriculum, while helping students formulate the newfound knowledge in their minds. Making learning relevant is the focus and the silent prayer with which many teachers begin their days. As the children arrive in classrooms, teachers are faced with the challenge of making an imprint that reaches the student both cognitively and affectively.

A sound educational experience in the affective domain includes developing learning options, criteria for identifying gifted students, and training teachers on how to best facilitate affective classroom management strategies (Cross, 2002). Counseling support coupled with identifying family concerns will best serve gifted students in our schools (Moon, 2002). Incorporation in these previously identified areas will also accommodate educators of the gifted to create classroom atmospheres that best serve to enhance positive affective domain development.

Children, of course, due to their immaturity, often choose to focus their energies on *Carpe Diem*. Energy abounds throughout classrooms, and it is our teachers who must somehow gather it up and use it for the positive development of students. We must enable them to do so with training in areas that paint pictures of children and their unique developmental processes positively. When Cross (2001) began studying the last sixty years of research, it became evident that the focus in social and emotional “needs” changed to the term of “issue” (p. 9). This use of the word issue tends to provide perhaps a more positive connotation in this area of concern. These processes through which all humans progress should be understood and communicated clearly to teachers of the gifted student. The gifted students in the classrooms in our schools will benefit greatly by programming options that celebrate their unique differences.

DEFINITIONS OF GIFTEDNESS

In the early 1900’s, giftedness was viewed as students with high scores on intelligence tests. When Terman conducted his longitudinal studies of genius, he chose 1,528 students who tested with IQ’s greater than 140 and were over twelve years of age.

This study laid the groundwork and continued over a period of forty years. The study will continue until 2020 in order to record the entire life of each participant.

In 1969, congress mandated a study by the United States Commissioner of Education to determine if the needs of gifted and talented children within our schools were being met. In 1972, the Marland Report was completed and provided a definition that many schools and programs used to identify gifted and talented students. The areas of giftedness identified in the report include the general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability.

The 1980's brought a new perspective to the needs of gifted students. In a personal discussion with J. Juntune (personal communication, January 21, 1997) the focus of options needed for students was addressed. In 1980, Phil Donahue devoted one of the episodes of his then famous, "The Donahue Show" to awareness of gifted students who were dropping out of society and even committing suicide as their escape from life. The airing of this show caused people in the field to revisit the work of Hollingworth and Dabrowski which provided greater understanding of the role of the affective domain in giftedness. The research of Hollingworth (1922) gives clarity to the importance of emotional lives of gifted children. She notes that "Schools cannot equalize children, schools can only equalize opportunity" (p. 298). In 1990, Linda Silverman synthesized the ideas that Leta Hollingworth wrote about in the 1920's. In her work with students who had over 180 IQ's, she noted that the higher the level of their cognitive ability, the greater their social and emotional needs (1942). The themes that Silverman (1990, pp. 171-177) extracted from Hollingworth's work are:

- Finding enough hard work and interesting work at school
- Adjusting to classmates
- Being able to play with other children
- Not becoming hermits
- Developing leadership abilities
- Not becoming negativistic towards authority
- Learning to “suffer fools gladly”
- Avoiding the formation of habits of extreme chicanery
- Conforming to rules and expectations
- Understanding their origin and destiny from an early age
- Dealing with the special problems of being a gifted girl

Many of the concerns stated by Silverman have created a misnomer as to what a gifted student looks like in the eyes of the educators who are in charge of shaping the educational opportunities of the child’s academic world. Gross (2002) recently adds that “the social and academic environments that form the core of students’ everyday experiences play a critical role in their social and emotional adjustment, as well as their ultimate productivity and life satisfaction” (p.27).

A more accurate definition of giftedness was developed by Roeper in 1982 as “a greater awareness, a greater sensitivity, and a greater ability to understand and transform perceptions into intellectual and emotional experiences” (p.21). She felt the focus on the way gifted students demonstrate emotional differences would lead to a better understanding of giftedness.

Systematic attempts to understand social and emotional development have only recently been renewed (Horowitz, 1987; Campos, Barrett, Lamb, Goldsmith, & Sternberg, 1983). Some educators feel that the gifted student is smart enough to figure out how to get along with others, how to be social in an appropriate way, and most importantly, how to fit into forming relationships with the other students. They are gifted; they can figure it out!

The State Plan for the state of Texas (1996) calls for designed programs for the gifted student who can “demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment” (p. 1). This difference between the definitions by Roeper, Dabrowski, The Columbus Group and what the state is looking for, perhaps could explain the focus that many school districts take when programming services for the gifted student in which the affective domain is overlooked.

STUDENT RELATED ISSUES

The gifted student’s definition has changed due to the focus of society’s view of the important characteristics that the community feels is important for their students to possess once they exit the halls of academia. Many school districts have formulated mission statements to provide staff, parents, and students with a vision to help in the journey of learning. These mission statements most often express the reoccurring theme of helping the youth under our charge so that he/she may “become a valued and valuable member of a vital democratic society” (Glickman, 2002, p. 96). This goal is one that can

only be accomplished through experiences and instruction that are also capsulated through an affective domain type of instruction as well as the currently designed cognitive approach. The educators involved in this process of creating an individual that will enhance our society must have the knowledge of issues that are a part of a gifted child's inherent make up. The issues that must be addressed are asynchronous development, Dabrowski's overexcitabilities, multipotentiality, and career awareness, and family issues.

ASYNCHRONOUS DEVELOPMENT

By the early 1990's the definition of giftedness was being expanded to include issues related to development. In 1991, a group of theorists, practitioners, and parents met to reexamine giftedness in Columbus, Ohio. They were known as the Columbus Group. This group found that a common thread in giftedness was out of sync development among the physical, cognitive, social and emotional domains.

Each of the domains develops at its own individual rate instead of remaining in sync with the other domains. The cognitive domain might experience fifteen months of development while the physical domain is experiencing ten months of development – all within a twelve month time period. This asynchronous development can have social and emotional consequences.

Linda K. Silverman (1993) writes that “gifted children not only think differently from their peers, they also feel differently” (p. 3). The classroom teacher must help the gifted student understand that he is different and unique in a positive way. Teachers must be trained to understand the developmental issues of the gifted and to amend basic curriculum to compliment the gifted student's abilities. The gifted student's development

may differ so much from the norm that he or she experiences less predictability about his or her development, and as a result they may not receive the emotional or social support from their age peer group that experiences similar changes (Neihart, 2002). This has been proposed as a possible risk factor for depression among gifted children. Neihart (2002a) states that “The high-ability child’s development may differ so much from the norm that he or she experiences additional stress and social isolation” (p. 95).

Gifted children experience the ability of cognitive advances within their intelligence, but they lack the emotional maturation to fully understand and to accept how to cope with their educational knowledge as well as with their personal skills.

DABROWSKI’S OVEREXCITABILITIES

The work conducted by Dabrowski (1967) in regards to overexcitabilities (OEs) and explained further by Piechowski (1979) add an interesting piece to the puzzle of educating gifted students in our schools. Perhaps if more educators, as well as parents, were familiar with his work students would experience a more positive experience in the school setting.

Overexcitabilities as described by Davis & Rimm (1994) “is the high level of sensitivity and excitability that energizes the highly gifted to great accomplishments and interesting lives” (p.404). Dabrowski has described five areas of OEs. All gifted people experience three of these areas. They are the areas of intellectual, imaginal, and emotional overexcitabilities.

The intellectual area has students searching through discovery, asking questions, and in a constant search for the truth. This OEs area loves ideas and then the capability

to analyze the new solutions that are created. The behaviors that are noticed include both the high ability to read as well as to maintain long periods of concentration. Strong beliefs are exhibited in a concern for values and morals. Metacognition is part of the inherent makeup due to the ability to think about their thinking (Davis & Rimm, 1994).

Imaginational overexcitabilities bring about vivid imaginations, fantasy, and dreams. Metaphorical thinking, inventions, poetic and dramatic performances are exhibited by this OE. Davis & Rimm (1994) find “there may be a mixing of truth and fiction, high visual recall, and despite their liking of the unusual, there may be fears of the unknown (p. 405).

In the emotional area there is the intensity of positive and negative feelings. These produce (Davis & Rimm, 1994) “soaring highs and dark lows” (p. 405). The tendencies of gifted students to possess a strong sense of right and wrong and to also identify with others through a show of concern and empathy allows the students to experience differing rates of emotional balance. They can identify an unjust situation and have difficulty with that situation. The emotional area can also bring about trouble in that they may be shy, fearful and often times will experience anxiety.

Gifted people sometimes experience the next two overexcitabilities that are described. These are not as commonly found in gifted people as those areas mentioned above. In the psychomotor area there is an abundance of energy, enthusiasm, and intensity. When communicating verbally, there may be compulsive talking and rapid speech. They may act impulsively upon a situation due to the pressure they feel. They may develop nervous habits such as nail biting.

An understanding of psychomotor OEs helps educators determine if the student has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or if this is a gifted student needing challenge and redirection. Students in today's classrooms are often being given labels of being hyperactive or having Attention Deficit Disorder because of their inability to focus on the teacher-provided lessons or because of the individual's display of excessive energy. The psychomotor overexcitability seems to cause many educators as well as parents to seek medical advice to diagnose high energy as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Medication is being prescribed for characteristics that according to Dabrowski's research are found in the gifted person. The behaviors that lead teachers and parents to assume ADHD are often the result from lack of challenge provided by the classroom settings (Robinson & Olszewski-Kubilius, 1996).

In the sensual area a pleasure is gained for seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, and hearing. These pleasures can lead into overeating, and excessiveness as in shopping. The sensual overexcitability can also lead to excessive sexual activities to help in the relief of inner tension (O'Connor, 2002).

The knowledge of the OE's is also something that gifted students need to be aware of so that they may form strategies in order to compensate for these. As the research states, these OE's will never go away, but is something the gifted person must learn to deal with on a daily basis. Dabrowski's theory points out that overexcitabilities "are part of the inherent makeup of the gifted, creative individual" (Bouchet & Falk, 2001, p. 260). Research studies have shown that intensities do exist in gifted individuals (Ackerman, 1997; Gallager, 1985; Schiever, 1985). The use of the Overexcitability Questionnaire – Two (Falk, Lind, Miller, Piechowski, & Silverman, 1999) will help

compare students and measure the different levels of the five forms of “psychic overexcitability” (O’Connor, 2002, p. 54). This tool may also help with the identification process of identifying and meeting the needs of our gifted students.

MULTIPOTENTIALITY AND CAREER AWARENESS

The gifted student has multipotentiality, and can excel in many areas. When interpreting Hoyt & Hebler (1974), Blackburn (1986) comments on references by a gifted student who expresses that, “Nothing is so simple for me that I can do a perfect job without effort, but nothing is so hard that I cannot do it. This is why I find it so difficult to decide my place in the future” (p. 554). Gifted students have the ability and are introduced to career choices in the elementary grades by lessons that the students undertake to show the possibilities for career opportunities within the integrated theme-based curriculum. The students in the early grades are formulating their passion. Davis & Rimm (1994) describe multipotentiality in gifted students as possessing “capabilities in many areas” (p. 407). They need to see to what career they may devote time each workday and still have the passion available to stir their sense of being after the job is complete each day. (Torrance, 1979b)

Career awareness is crucial to student success. For many gifted students their career capabilities are virtually limitless. According to Greene (2002), “Career plans can rarely be set in stone anymore, as plans must be constantly revised to adapt to a continually changing world” (p. 223).

FAMILY ISSUES

Family issues also become a factor in the classroom. These issues will find their way into parent teacher conferences with the parent wanting the teacher to help them understand what lies ahead for the child in his/her educational pursuit in which a gifted child may impact the family structure. Hackney (1981) states “competition among family members; sibling jealousy; insensitivity to each member’s unique sense of giftedness; and lack of respect for each member’s differences” (p. 51). Hackney also noted in the research that one overlying question from parents is how far does a family need to adapt in order to meet the needs of their gifted child? Gifted students with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder also must have the issues recognized in order to be addressed in the school setting. Early intervention is so important so that the compensation strategies are introduced and practiced and that the symptoms of AD/HD do not progress to “problems with substance abuse, oppositional defiant disorder, or conduct disorder”(Moon, 2002, p. 198).

Parents learn that their expectations might be inappropriate and not realistic for their child. They need help to formulate a clearer picture of who their child is, and of what he may be able to accomplish in the public school setting. The parents and teacher may also provide a unified front for the student so that as Peterson (1977) noted allows the child a strong support system to help guide him through the rocky waters that may lie ahead on this road of gifted education.

Hackney (1981) also noted that if parents feel that the student is bored with school, then it is surmised that the teacher’s lack of enthusiasm in the presentation of the materials probably encouraged that lack of interest. If the student is a discipline problem

in a classroom, then the material being presented by the teacher is probably not motivating the child to behave in an acceptable manner. If the student is obsessed in regards to the amount of projects he or she undertakes, then it is most assuredly the school's fault with requirements of standards that are excessive. Parents of gifted students must help their child learn to adapt to the classroom setting and to learn the rules of the game that they must follow in order to have a successful school experience. Helping the child learn when it is appropriate to conform to the classroom procedure or when the educator will tolerate non-conformity is imperative. How to study the areas of interest without insulting the teacher or disturbing others must be observed in their quest for knowledge is a very important compensation technique that according to Schwartz (1981) will allow a gifted student to pursue individual interests without interfering with the teacher's instruction. Silverman (1993) interprets Piechowski's (1989) most poetic explanation of the important roles parents and mentors play with gifted children:

The great achievers and the eminent as a rule have a parent or mentor especially devoted to them. No doubt it takes considerable dedication and integrity to live for the child but not through the child, to cherish and guide rather than to want to own. Thus, nurturing generations appear to be necessary to the achieving ones. The idea behind this view is simply to acknowledge the great importance of those who nurture the talents of their children" (p.22).

SCHOOL RELATED ISSUES

The gifted student then must carry the unique differences that is his or her makeup as he or she walks into the school building each day. These differences are then defined and looked at with different views depending upon the classroom management, assessment practices, teacher characteristics, and programming options. The knowledge that the educators in charge of the gifted student's education possess determine whether the school building is a good place for learning to take place or whether that gifted student's learning should take place outside of school building.

STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

When in a homogeneous classroom, the gifted and talented student often is familiar with the curriculum before arriving for class. He usually wonders why he must hear the same information over and over until it becomes a boring, redundant exercise. He becomes bored quickly when required to sit and listen to an adult lecture with what he considers to be a limited amount of knowledge. Classroom management strategies often become an issue in this type of instruction. Gifted students question their requirement to participate in cooperative groupings with students who seem to be unable to keep up with the moment much less the subject. They express their thoughts openly. They think that if the regular student would just work harder he, too, could earn straight A's (Kerr, 1991). Those labeled gifted and talented enter the classroom each morning with individual, unique questions, desires, and they often receive disappointment. They are offered redundant lessons; they already know that r-e-d spells red. Their expanse of knowledge

as well as their ability to solve problems comes easily. Yet our schools require gifted students to sit and listen rather than have opportunity to fulfill their learning needs.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

Classroom management concerns also become an issue in the puzzle of social and emotional development that educators need to become familiar with in order to address issues associated with gifted students in the classroom. Marzano, Pickering & McTighe (1993) state that “feeling comfortable in the classroom, for instance, is important to learning” (p. 1). To create a climate of learning the teacher must also take into account the emotional intelligence of the students assigned that school year. Gregory & Chapman (2002) point out that “Emotional intelligence is a person’s ability to use his or her emotions intelligently” (p. 7). Goleman (1995) shows the art of balancing of an individual’s emotions with reason can be organized into five domains: self-awareness, managing emotions, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. The effective classroom teacher can evaluate and then help each student develop areas of weakness so that the students may learn in varied environments. The teacher must learn to understand the various special topics that tend to be evident in the gifted student as well as how a student must experience or deal with these various traits. Issues such as perfectionism, underachievement, gender issues, and lack of risk taking can play havoc in a student’s educational experience. Schuler(2002) & Reis (2002) find that “perfectionism can cause talented women to set unreasonable goals and to spend their lives trying to achieve perfection in work, home, body, children, wardrobe, and other areas” (p. 131). Adderholt and Goldberg (1999) describe how perfectionists use this as a reason to not complete a

task or project. Some gifted students to help disguise future accomplishments or projects possibility use procrastination. Procrastination can also be a sign of a student suffering from the impostor syndrome as described by Kerr (1994). Perfectionism is also a factor that could trigger depression symptoms among our gifted students, Neihart, 2002. Reis & McCoach (2002) indicate that “many gifted students continue to do well on achievement or reasoning tests, but, in their failure to turn in assignments or to attend or participate in class, demonstrate their disengagement from the educational process” (p. 81). Having an educator who is familiar with the issues and who has training as to how to help a student work through the issues can only help to provide a positive impact on the educational journey of the gifted students in the classrooms across the nation. Studies have shown “...that the single most powerful predictor of positive outcomes for vulnerable children is a relationship with a caring adult” (Neihart, 2002, p. 114). Tomlinson (2001) interprets from “National Research Council, 1990; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998” that learning “takes place most effectively in classrooms where knowledge is clearly and powerfully organized, students are highly active in the learning process, assessments are rich and varied, and students feel a sense of safety and connection” (p. 8). Webb & Tolan (1982) have conducted research to provide the common reasons for lack of motivation. Barbara Kerr (1991) calls for our schools to be child centered. Neihart (2002b) finds that “Resilience research demonstrates that emotional health and social competence are attained not so much as a result of individual characteristics, but from a transaction among children, their families, and the community” (p. 119). Neihart & Olenchak (2002) add that “Creatively gifted individuals also tend to be much less motivated by external

rewards like grades and public recognition, and they tend to be more driven by a love of engagement in creative work” (p. 167).

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION TRAINING

Classroom teachers without the proper training simply provide more work assignments, which has coined the phrase of “more of the same rather than instead of” for bright students in educational settings. Teachers of the gifted must “change from lesson hearers, re-explainers of textbook materials, and correctors of errors” (Miller, 1978, p. 288) “to managers of learning experiences and developers of skills such as creative thinking and problem solving, interdependence and teamwork, and interdisciplinary thinking” (Torrance, 1979a, p. 10). Betts (1985) has designed activities to help gifted students assess their strengths and weaknesses and to incorporate strategies to improve social development in the school setting. The Autonomous Learner Model (Betts, 1985) helps students to address areas of study which have relevance for the learner and to improve organizational systems. Numerous strategies have been developed to improve the social and emotional development of gifted students as cited in the following references. The strategies can be divided into two areas: one becomes a model of development, while the other compares intervention strategies to promote the well being of social and emotional development. Social and Emotional Strategies include awareness of self, understanding the meaning of being labeled gifted, and accepting the differences associated with being a gifted individual (Betts, 1986).

COGNITIVE VERSUS AFFECTIVE DOMAIN IN THE CLASSROOM

The cognitive domain is an area of constant development in our schools while the affective domain is often not addressed at all when curriculum departments create plans of scope and sequences. According to Keiley's (2002) interpretation of various researchers, "Garber & Dodge, 1991; Martin & Tesser, 1996; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Gardner, 1993; Kelly & Moon, 1998; Moon, in press", "The affective domain has been heralded as foundational in the development of personal and social talents and an essential component of motivation and social and emotional functioning" (p. 41). It is these plans that teachers must utilize in order to meet curriculum requirements fully for the gifted student. The Texas State Plan (p. 8) for gifted students in Texas does address affective instruction in the area of nature and needs instruction, but this call to action only addresses those districts that pursue an exemplary rating. Only adults who are assisting in the development of students, mentors, and such, are encouraged to receive this instruction. Classroom teachers are usually not required to receive this training. The Texas State Plan (1996) notes that "Mentors and others who offer specialized instruction for gifted/talented students are provided training to increase their understanding of the nature and needs of these students and the district goals for the program" (p. 8).

Educators should become aware and more concerned about affective factors in learning and development. Gagne, Yekovich, & Yekovich (1993) refer to the work of Fiske (1982) that "thoughts cause feelings which cause actions; that is, schemas trigger affect" (p. 436). George Betts' (1988) theoretical model ascertains developing programming areas in the affective domain most often associated with gifted students. Betts (1986) stated that a "comprehensive approach to differentiating instruction for the

gifted must involve values, feelings, personal growth, and interpersonal relations” (p. 587). The medical field is also helping in identifying and perhaps with guidance in the realm of issues that are typical of gifted students. Robinson & Olszewski-Kubilius (1996) describe that gifted students are “out of sync” (p. 433). This knowledge that is shared with the medical field can only help educators see the need and importance of developing programs to help gifted students in our schools to understand this reality and to be given the techniques to compensate in this area of development.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

The tendency is to become rushed in the presentation of all the objectives that are to be introduced, evaluated, and mastered each school year. The push for testing on the student’s attainment on minimum basic skills also places undue stress on the classroom teacher to provide instruction to meet the needs of all the students assigned to that classroom. The instruction will become objective based within the spectrum of cognitive development without incorporating the training necessary for also providing the inclusion of social and emotional development. Schmoker (1999) states that local districts need to define a clear set of instructional practices that teachers must follow in order to assess their students. Assessment must match and be defined so when preparing lessons we are beginning with the end in mind (Rosenholtz 1991). Gifted students receive mixed messages as to what they are supposed to do in the educational setting as well as when and how to answer questions posed by the classroom teacher. Erickson (2001) notes that “When teachers delight in the uniqueness of children, they come to know each child well. They look for the gift that each child brings and take opportunities to fan the ember into

flame” (p. 209). Colangelo (1993) points out “There is a great fear of being misunderstood. Most want “baking time” for their thoughts and feel teachers want short, quick, superficial answers in class” (p. 114). Kerr (1991) best states the theory of assessing in that an educator must not forget the student’s feelings, his beliefs, and the unique and individual talents our students bring each day into the school building.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS

Schmitz & Galbraith (1985) determined that what students want most in their teachers is a good sense of humor. Students seek instruction that consists of more than the telling and retelling of facts. The teacher who also can understand and help address issues of development is far more beneficial and revered in the eyes of students than the lecturer who simply spouts knowledge. Research suggests that many factors determine the success of the student attainment of required knowledge, but the most important factor in the classroom is the teacher (Stronge & Hindman, 2003). Nieto (2003) writes when interviewing teachers on why they continue in the profession, the word love kept being used in the interviews. When pursuing this term “love”, the definition that the teachers continually demonstrated was the demonstration of having high expectations for the students they taught and placing rigorous demands upon required programs and assessments that were assigned. These teachers also continued their own personal learning by keeping up with their subject matter by attending professional activities. Stronge (2002) states that “effective teachers care for the student first as a person, and second as a student (p. 15). Webb & Tolan (1982) also state that in order to help the underachiever the teacher needs to show an interest in the student’s activities and

individual feelings. Glickman's (2002) description of the four quadrants to define the types of teachers in a school building show that one serves best for gifted students. Quadrant IV is the professional teacher who can think at high abstract levels, has the commitment to plan, and who is then able to carry out the lessons that our gifted students need in order to connect the lessons inside a school to the everyday relevance and the joy of learning.

Jensen (1998) writes that emotions help a learner to link meaning. When the chemicals, adrenaline, norepinephrine, and vasopressin are introduced, (Hooper and Teresi, 1986), the brain is sent a signal that this information is important to remember. Teachers using this emotional link are then able to hook a student into the learning process, and can also bring in past knowledge which is critical for the all-important connection of prior to future learning objectives.

Teaching of empathy is an area that many educators feel is important and an achievable goal in our schools. According to Cross (2001) "Without empathy, gifted children can come to believe that they are completely estranged from others since the more obvious differences will dominate their perspectives of others" (p. 44). Incorporating literature, role playing and fictional situations will allow students to be able to grasp the perspective of others. This can most assuredly help the gifted student begin to understand that each being reacts or thinks in a particular way because of how he processes information, and most importantly, is how each of us comes to understand any situation.

COUNSELING OF THE GIFTED STUDENT

Counseling issues become critical components in programming needs for the gifted student. The teacher in a classroom may group students according to the issues that exhibit characteristics that are in need of support. Moon (2002) states “the most common counseling need of this population is assistance in coping with stressors related to growing up as a gifted child in a society that does not always recognize, understand, or welcome giftedness” (p. 213). This classroom support group can then become a source for gifted students to meet and to express their fears, questions, and concerns about themselves. Colangelo (1993) commented on feedback of students that had this specific type of support, “I never knew anyone else felt like that --thought like that” (p. 114). The teacher need not have a counseling background. Instead, he or she needs the unique talent to identify issues and then he or she needs to spend the time to listen, to make notes, and to guide the support group through a series of topics that are relevant to the group members. The trained educator will also see the importance and be able to orchestrate a group of support and not one of dependence. The support session can also help set the stage for the student so that when trying a new activity, the student enters the arena with a solution that is also backed up with alternate solutions in case the first one does not work or is not quite the appropriate way to encounter a particular problem.

Gifted students need to have time together to discuss issues that they sometimes feel are only happening to them on a personal level. Rimm (2002) indicates that this support for gifted students will help to shape talents in a positive direction, especially those students in their adolescent years. Colangelo (1997) finds that the overall

component of counseling is to look at giftedness “not as a problem to be solved, but a unique challenge to be nourished” (p. 362). He also stresses the fact in this well researched area that the student’s family and school situation are areas for counselors to factor in when assessing students. Cross (1997, 2001) suggests that when implementing strategies for gifted youth that a respect for intertwining both academic and social and emotional needs must be addressed. This together time is beneficial in order for them to develop both emotionally and socially. Support must be provided on an ongoing basis in order to achieve total growth for the student. This important component of the gifted program is perhaps one that is overlooked. Betts (1986) suggests that “gifted individuals will become the leaders of tomorrow only if people take the time and energy to nurture them today” (p. 589). The educator who finds the time and who cares enough to guide students through a support group will surely be thought to be one who truly is a positive advocate of gifted education.

BIBLIOTHERAPY

Bibliotherapy is beneficial in the classroom because it allows students to search for solutions for problems that may exist without the fear of failure. Hoagland (1972) defined bibliotherapy as, “the attempt of an individual to promote his mental and emotional health by using reading materials to fulfill needs, relieve pressures or help his development as a person” (p. 390). The gifted student most likely is one who is a voracious reader and because of the variety of literature and his ability to read from numerous selections, educators may use this skill to the gifted student’s advantage. The educator may instruct students to read particular literature because of its overall theme.

He may also assign certain titles to a group of students who display and have the same characteristic as evidenced in a particular situation. Bibliotherapy is very advantageous for the gifted student because it enables the child to identify and to visualize what the author is communicating in the piece of writing. The teacher who has the knowledge of the importance of affective education will also be able to choose literature that is appropriate for the gifted student and to enable him to find appropriate answers to his own unique challenges. The gifted student may have an advanced reading vocabulary, but the content of the piece of literature may extract emotions leading to conclusions that may be disturbing for the student. The gifted student's reading level may also be one that is advanced; therefore, the subject matter may not be appropriate for that particular child.

PROGRAMMING NEEDS

The integral components of gifted education are crucial in the area of programming needs. In the school system where every dollar is viewed through a magnifying glass, it is imperative that the educators who are in charge of the gifted students are aware of the specific needs that will have a positive impact upon our gifted population. The school system must look at all the learners in the many various programs that are attending their schools. Csikszentmihalyi & Larson (1984) point out that "a community needs people who are self-confident, motivated to achieve yet respectful of those who are adaptable, original, and not at peace with themselves, more than it needs students who score high on tests" (p. 199). The gifted population must have a group of educators who are in their court. This group must be knowledgeable of the various needs that gifted students require in order to become productive citizens in our society. Sidney

Moon (2002) outlines key points to help this group to sustain attention in the classroom, to be able to shift their attention during transitions, monitor progress on long term projects, keeping homework up to date, organize student lockers, notebooks, and simply following directions. The current system of education seems to consist of “dummying down” of our student population. George Betts (1986) identified seven categories for curriculum development for emotional and social growth for gifted students. Each area includes affective development:

- Awareness , understanding, and acceptance of self
- Awareness, understanding, and acceptance of others
- Interpersonal Skills
- Creativity
- Group process and interaction skills
- Relaxation and Visual Imagery
- Problems of Being Gifted
- Nurturing Environments and People

Today’s traditional teaching according to Blackburn (1986) “tends to emphasize convergent thinking and rote memory” (p. 553) in the lessons that are instructed for the students. Teachers must observe students to ensure that proper developmental phases are recognized so that steps may be taken to provide a successful experience if needed in this process. Bright students are encouraged to hide their curiosities as well as their creativity in order to blend in with the mainstream of today’s students in the classroom.

The need to provide affective education must become an important and critical component of the gifted program. Goals of all gifted programs should be to build strong

affective domain foundations for the pursuit of knowledge for the gifted students. The advocates of gifted education must also continue to bring burning issues to the forefront to help the gifted student to understand why he or she is different and why that difference is okay. Educators must also be knowledgeable and understand that gifted students just need more time in order to pursue their interests, their passions, and their differences. E. Paul Torrance (1979b) states that gifted students have talents and these are their passions. Part of giftedness is the ability to “fall in love with something” (p. 93).

SUMMARY

The need for students having a connection between the cognitive and the affective domains is evident in the research citations presented in this chapter. Students obtaining knowledge in a classroom setting is determinant upon the climate and the emotional well being of the student. Effective teachers in the school setting have the understanding that students must have the ability to feel safe so that their performance is truly reflective of their obtainment of objectives (Darling-Hammond, 2003). The feeling of being safe can bring to one’s mind many different ideas. The feeling of safety for self, the ability to speak and to not be made to feel ridiculous, and a feeling that all answers to questions will follow a structure so that the unknown can be sought.

The classroom holds a limitless atmosphere in which a child will experience many sensations, overcome obstacles that shape his mind to form his sense of individuality. The teacher of this classroom holds the key that will enable many students to unlock magical doors that will shed streams of light upon this journey to find their own answers. In the words of William James, “Students who feel good about themselves as human

beings, not just scholars, grow up to become ‘Effective geniuses’: young people in touch with both their hearts and their minds, adults as willing and able to *care* deeply as to *think* deeply” (Delisle, 1992, p. 67). The issues that are ever present in gifted students forever reach across the curriculum needs into who they really are. Alfred Tannebaum, keynote speaker, at the Texas Association for Gifted and Talented passionately spoke to the thousands of educators in Houston, Texas, 1999, not of curricular issues, but of the educator’s role of ensuring that today’s gifted student must learn to use his intelligence for good measures, to become a contributing member of society, and be one who helps rather than hinders our world. The educator upon hearing that school bell toll each morning should stop and think very seriously about his role in each of his student’s lives. Each teacher must continually seek information that will allow students to reach their full potential as well as to provide opportunities that will encourage each student to become a confident and productive member of society. Delisle (1992) emphasizes that “Expect, expect much dear reader, for you have only today, and a finite number of tomorrows to affect the self-concepts and achievements of the students in your care” (p. 49). As with J. Delisle’s candid way to make his points, we must ask how and when will the programming for today’s gifted student begin to intertwine the mind with the heart into the programming issues of today’s schools?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative case study format was chosen for this study because it allowed the researcher to discover and to gain an understanding of the elements that were incorporated within the training the participants received to meet the needs of gifted students within the classroom. The research conducted is not to confirm or disconfirm earlier findings, but is a process that involves revision and provides relevance to best understand the experience that is being studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). This approach allowed the researcher to approach the study in a holistic manner by gathering data from participants through interviews and observations. Later the data was analyzed for emerging themes and patterns.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

A qualitative case study is “expected to catch the complexity of a single case” (Stake, 1995, p. xi). The details of the interactions, descriptions of the setting, and the use of interviews and observations help to tell the story. These constructs of the events bring about meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The role of the qualitative researcher is to emphasize “episodes of nuance, the sequentiality of happenings in context, the wholeness of the individual” (Stake, 1995, p. xii). The data that is gleamed from the story provides the reader with descriptions so that the story can be told, as if the reader is there, participating in the tale.

The purpose of the study was to gather training elements that are necessary in order for teachers to best serve the gifted student in the classroom. The offerings that school districts and universities provide are different in the amount of time that teachers exert to obtain the topics in a university setting which is thirty clock hours as compared with the six clock-hour training that most school districts offer. Teachers may obtain the required thirty hours of awareness needed to teach identified gifted and talented students while investing far different amounts of learning time. The use of qualitative research helped to best explain the process used within overlying questions that were sought from the teachers and administrators who were interviewed. The use of qualitative research for the interviews of teachers who have had university training and have received an endorsement in gifted education, and teachers who have taken the district offering of social and emotional training, helped to bring about an understanding of the topics that each training offered and to understand if these strategies were then implemented within the classroom setting. To determine why the training was offered at the district level, the study also included the interviews of the administrators. To assess if the elements that best benefit students in their social and emotional development were being implemented in the classroom, classroom procedures and routines had to be explained by the teachers. In order to determine if these teachers used the various practices as learned in training, the interview of an elementary campus principal helped to clarify if the effective techniques were that of a master teacher or that of someone who implemented the recommended practices within the classroom.

HUMAN INSTRUMENT

The main instrument in qualitative research is the human instrument. Lincoln and Guba (1985) detail advantages as to why the human form is beneficial as the sole gathering instrument in a case study format.

The reasons are as follows:

1. A qualitative researcher is able to collect responses and to respond to provide further explanation.
2. The researcher can interact and alter the situation in order to best assess and guide the interview dependent upon the respondent's statements.
3. Phenomenon presented is viewed within a holistic context and data gathered follows patterns.
4. The researcher can build upon the base of tacit knowledge through the collection of the data.
5. The data collected by the researcher is theorized and tested to bring a comprehensive final presentation collection of descriptions.
6. The researcher can provide a summary so that clarification can be gained from the respondent.

SUBJECTS

Respondents for this case study were eight elementary classroom teachers of the gifted, one advanced academic specialist, one executive director of curriculum, and one elementary school principal employed by Pearland Independent School District in Pearland, Texas. This purposeful sampling generated elementary teachers located at

three of the eight elementary school campuses. The principal was located at an elementary school while the Advanced Academic Specialist and Executive Director are located at the district's educational support center annex. The classroom teacher respondents were chosen for the study based on the number of hours each had acquired to gain the necessary hours to teach gifted students in the classroom. Four of the classroom teachers had fulfilled the thirty hours of awareness that is required by the State Plan which had included six clock hours of social and emotional development training. The other four had obtained an endorsement in gifted and talented that had training in social and emotional development as a university course offering as thirty clock hours of training. The administration respondents and sites were chosen based on the availability of data they could share in their training development and need for programming issues, hiring practices, and general expectations of implementing classroom procedures necessary for the development of students in areas of social and emotional development the classroom.

PROCEDURES

The research population was identified through a record search of teachers having gifted and talented endorsements or thirty hours of awareness for gifted and talented training. An examination of documents provided the researcher with an understanding of the training the respondents have received with district training options in the area of social and emotional development for the gifted and talented.

Interviews were scheduled and conducted with the participants. Those interviewed included eight elementary teachers with the required training components and three administrators that are involved with gifted and talented programming services.

The respondents have acquired the necessary training as cited by the Texas Education Agency in the Texas Administrative Code. The code establishes that a “minimum of thirty (30) hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of gifted / talented students, assessing students needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students” (p. 13). These conversations guided the researcher as to the amount of training and the depth at which the educator activates within the classroom and delineates within the lesson plans. Unstructured conversations also followed after the initial interview to best capture the understanding of the teacher’s understanding and implementation of the social and emotional development within their classroom. Some of these conversations included after school conversations, parent teacher conferences, and comments made in faculty or department meetings.

Informal observations were conducted before, during and after the interview sessions. Informal classroom observations were implemented to help the researcher gain an understanding of the types of strategies used within the classroom setting.

Member checks were conducted to verify the information recorded. Peer debriefings were then held to gain knowledge within the subject area. The interviews were coded to reveal the emerging themes for the qualitative data. Descriptive analysis was written to record each respondent’s understanding of social and emotional development.

DOCUMENT SEARCH

Documents were used to gain an understanding of the training and programming options provided by the district for the educators and gifted students. All relevant

documents and written information concerning the training elements of elementary teachers included agendas for training, certification requirements, state plan for gifted and talented, the district's five year plan, district and school mission statements, and demographics for the school district. The findings gave insight into the training options that were available for the respondents. The principal shared the interview protocol used for the hiring new teachers. The advanced academic specialist shared the district's five-year plan. This provided insight in the goal of the district to include social and emotional development topics within the classroom. The executive director of curriculum and instruction shared the documents that will be reviewed in December 2003 to help the district complete the District's Effectiveness Compliance (DEC) as conducted by the Texas Education Agency.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data from these various sources from formal and informal interviews, informal observations, and pertinent documents, was analyzed according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) and themes were constructed. The analysis of data began when information was gathered and transcribed. The process of collecting and then analyzing the data was an ongoing process throughout the study. Erlandson et al. (1993) refined the process by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and described the acquisition of data as a process of “ (1) unitizing data, (2) emergent category designation, and (3) negative case analysis...and (4) bridging, extending, and surfacing data” (p. 116). Miller, Crabtree (1994) refer to the work of Renata Tesch (1990) and used the summarization of categorizing the process into three areas, “ developing an organizing system, segmenting the data, and making

connections” (p. 345). Taking the findings produced from the formal and informal interviews, gleaming the findings to thematic units.

The work of ethnography according to Spradley (1979) can be divided “into two major tasks, *discovery* and *description*” (p. 17). The transcripts and notes were read many times. Lists of specific and relevant findings from the respondents were also studied. Unitizing began after the interview tapes were transcribed. This chunking of information into units of information as described by Erlandson (1993) helps the construct of the information so that the tiniest piece of social construct can be recognized (p. 117). These coded themes were then categorized to determine related themes within the data. The units contained two to three words and sometimes more words on the three by five-inch index cards, depending on the respondents and their verbal ability. A color coding system was established for each respondent’s information. The coding used was assignment of color, interview number, page number, line number and date of the interview. The groups interviewed were charted to show the areas of highest knowledge level to the lowest.

Emergent themes were coded using the source of information, the category and the theme that emerged from the information. Example of this system is the initial of respondent, number of interview and page number. Unplanned findings produced new thought processes in order to prove or disprove the original hypothesis (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen, 1993). Overlying themes became apparent as Erlandson et al. (1993) indicated, saying that the data may guide the researcher to a point of whether data is to be linked with overlying themes that has been collected. The transcriptions and the notes taken and chunked by emergent themes were read several times to ensure that

emergent information was found and recorded. This sorting technique occurred several times to ensure proper categorization had occurred. A peer review and debriefing then occurred after the sorting to review the categories and check for agreement with the categories.

A reflexive journal was used to record thoughts, emerging data, informal observations of the classroom, and the process that was used in the study. A simple coding system was implemented by using the date of the interview and the name and location of the school building to keep the interviews organized according to the training that each respondent had received.

ESTABLISHING TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness helped to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability using methods as described by Erlandson et al. (1993), Bogdan and Bilken (1998), and Merriam (1998).

Credibility

The respondents participating in the study must understand the importance of the collection of the required information. This allows that the shared information is relevant from their reality so that findings and assumptions made through the study reflect their construct (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The information that is necessary is coming from those interviewed so it is important for them to see the study as positive and credible. Credibility was established through the use of triangulation, member checks, as well as peer debriefings. This helped to build rapport with the respondents. I did this by setting initial appointments that best met the needs of the respondents. I chose to have

the initial interview in their classroom so that they would be comfortable in their environment. This also allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the respondent's world as well as establish a safe area for them to share their views in the area of question. The demeanor and mannerisms that I used during and after the interview sessions allowed the respondent to maintain a comfortable and professional relationship. These techniques established rapport and most importantly the needed trust in order to gather the data. The building of trust and also the gathering of data to then check from the multiple sources is suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Triangulation developed with the collection of detailed and thick descriptions with rich details that was used along with the variety of sources of data, methods, and theory to confirm the results (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The gathering and comparing of information from a variety of sources as it emerges helps to establish credibility. Triangulation provided a deeper understanding of the course work and the university studies that the respondents had experienced. This also helped to show the similarities in the knowledge level of the respondents who participated in studies at similar districts or universities. The data collected from the interviews and observations from respondents who had a variety of training experiences provided the important aspect of triangulation. This also helped to bring meaning and understanding to the people and their views on this topic. Sharing the information, sharing and raising topics with multiple respondents with different points of view, and then looking to see if there were similarities achieved triangulation.

Unstructured interviews, dialogue, and conversations established prolonged engagement with participants. I was able to establish prolonged engagement through the

months that I spent in the schools. I was able to observe teachers having conferences with parents of gifted students and listen to their comments at these meetings. I was also able to listen to comments made by administrators at meetings that helped to develop a clearer picture of the construct.

Member checks helped to show that the findings that had been formulated were indeed the findings that had been given by the respondents. Having the stakeholders review and add comments to the acquired findings helped to establish credibility (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The written transcripts that had been generated after the initial interview and then a process using peer review verified that the information that had been acquired through an interview process had been correctly interpreted by the researcher. Informal walk throughs also occurred due to my position and ability to walk in and out of classrooms. This allowed key elements to become focused. The use of informal walk throughs helped me to see if techniques were actually being used in the classroom. These observations were recorded in the reflexive journal and allowed me to check information.

Member checks helped to establish credibility by having the respondents review confirm, and comment on my interpretations of the findings. After each interview I had a brief oral member check to clarify the information and bring together points that the respondent wished to make. Field notes were transcribed and sent to each person for review. This helped with the next informal meeting to be clear that the information shared was accurate as their construct. This process allowed the respondent to review the information, correct mistakes, and also to then share new knowledge or even clarify the material shared. This process was continuous throughout the project.

Peer debriefings were also used to ensure credibility. These took place with colleagues who have knowledge in the area of the topic of study. Erlandson et al. (1993) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) recommend having these review sessions to help the researcher become cognizant of emergent themes and insight obtained through the study. They provided guidance and advice also. This was helpful for me to bring meaning to the topic and the direction to proceed.

Transferability

Erlandson et al. (1993) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) provide that a study of the qualitative nature allows for transferability. Situations or knowledge that is shared can be reported using the format that is rich with detail and thick. “Thick description” allows for transferability of the findings so that the dependability of the report helps the reader feel as if he or she is present at the interviews. The purposeful sampling of choosing respondents allowed me to gain insight into the areas to study.

Dependability And Confirmability

Replication of a study is an important element in research. Finding respondents with similar experiences and communicating information that indicates similar themes establishes dependability and confirmability. Erlandson et al. (1993) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) advise that engaging in triangulation, peer debriefings and member checks can establish dependability and confirmability. The data was examined and peer debriefing sessions allowed an understanding of the data to take place. To establish the dependability of the data and the information extracted from the peer review debriefing sessions and audit trail was established. The audit trail provided a check of the information obtained through the interviews and documents to support and accurately

establish the information. Confirmability was established even though I was an insider. I stayed aware of the relationship that I had with the respondents and tried to remain non-judgmental to their biases, perceptions, and motivations. I worked to maintain detachment with the participants.

ASSUMPTIONS

Teachers with six hours of training as compared with those with thirty hours of university course training in social and emotional development will have a less significant amount of knowledge. This less trained group will also not have extensive knowledge in the use of effective strategies, vocabulary, and flexibility to guide gifted students in effective social and emotional development in the classroom. The personal connection that the researcher has with the teachers and administrators being interviewed may have some effect on the dialogue that took place during the interviews. There is a strong understanding among the district about the passion and knowledge that exists in the area of social and emotional development by the researcher. The researcher tried to remain cognizant of this impact as she gathered and analyzed the data.

SUMMARY

This study is to provide the information about training elements of elementary teachers in social and emotional development of gifted students. This chapter provided the procedures used to gather the information of various training experiences. This chapter also explained the interpretation used to analyze the findings. According to Stake (1995) "The use of case study is to understand something else" (p. 3). The understanding of the course topics and the ability to incorporate these components in the classroom were

evident in the observations made and also in the interviews. The techniques used were those of a qualitative nature and allowed this researcher to experience and discuss the different thoughts, attitudes, and training experiences of the elementary teachers.

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

With the creation of the State Plan for the Development of Educational Programs for Gifted and Talented Students in November, 1996, all school districts in the state of Texas must provide programming that include various areas in order to obtain ratings to show the caliber of the programming. Pearland Independent School District has recently begun to look at the needs of the gifted students and to take steps to accomplish the goals set forth by the Texas State Board of Education. The most recent *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* provides five areas of development for gifted students in the public school systems. The areas include assessment, programming design, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and family/community involvement. Each area is important for programming needs provided to gifted students.

The major area of concern for Pearland Independent School District is training needs for the teachers and counselors working with the gifted students. The district created a position for the development of advanced programming for the students. The Advanced Academic Specialist has been charged to formulate a plan with the desire to receive the coveted exemplary rating according to the guidelines set forth in the *Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students*.

Educators know that an effective classroom must meet the needs of each child. The needs of students within a heterogeneous classroom vary thus requiring varied approaches to make a positive impact within the classroom setting. Betts (1986) stated that “gifted individuals will become the leaders of tomorrow only if people take the time and energy to nurture them today” (p. 589). Educators will explore methods as outlined

by the educational programs, models, and theories to gain an understanding as to how to help the gifted students obtain compensation skills to make a positive difference in society.

THE DISTRICT

Pearland Independent School district is located southeast of Houston, Texas in Brazoria County. The town encompasses a total of 72.3 square miles with the school district having the authority to educate students within 43.5 square miles of the land. The population has had a 115 percent increase based on April 2001 statistics as compared with June 2002 totals. The total population as of June 2002 is 45,153 with the school district having a student enrollment of 13,000 students being educated in the seventeen schools. The town boasts of its location and is luring many people to this area. Today, third generation ranching families find new spacious and expensive subdivisions springing up all around them. Easy access to downtown Houston, to the Texas Medical Center and Johnson Space Center helps make living in Pearland and commuting to the close surrounding areas a huge bonus for the families moving to this area. Highway 288 is a fairly unknown route; therefore, as yet it remains relatively free of congestion by Harris County standards, and provides easy access for the homeowners. Brazoria County lies along this thoroughfare and holds the record for the most undeveloped land in this area. This is another reason why there is such rapid growth and housing developments moving into the area.

The district has allowed the elementary schools to be site-based managed for several years. The schools are nestled among the neighborhoods and enjoy a true sense of community. When reading the state's mandate of site-based committee charges, the

reader with experience in Pearland Independent School District would feel as though the state modeled these practices on the existing management of the schools. With the community growing and the development of upscale housing projects near Highway 288, the district is finding that the growth of the school district is requiring the individual schools to look closely at the equalization of program offerings. The various communities have similar needs and goals for the education of their children, but yet they also desire programs that sometimes do not look like those others are implementing. An example of this difference is the composition of the program that serves the identified gifted and talented students in the elementary grades. The eight elementary schools service students in grades pre-kindergarten through fourth grade. The requirements for a student to have the label of gifted and talented follows the state's criteria. Representatives from each elementary campus meet once a year to present the student's portfolios that have acquired the quantitative and qualitative pieces that have been completed by the referred students. The testing that the students must complete as well as the percentile that students must demonstrate has kept the number of gifted students low. Some of the campuses do not have any students identified as gifted and talented while other campuses have anywhere from three students per grade level to ten identified for the entire school population. The programs vary, of course, based on the number of identified students.

The general practice of having a designated class to service the gifted students was then used to accommodate the high-achieving students. The campus would ask permission from the non-identified student's parents as to whether or not they would be agreeable to have their child or children placed in this rigorous setting. Due to the pace

of the program and to the parent expectations that this class placed upon the school, the teacher assigned was most likely a veteran teacher with years of successful teaching practice and good rapport within the school community. The skills that this teacher possessed were those that would greatly benefit all learners, most particularly the struggling learner.

This particular setting exists at each grade level in the eight elementary schools. This classroom has an accelerated curriculum that best services the students in the cognitive domain. The identified gifted students who need and require the necessary components of the affective domain stand out, and are sometimes not allowed to continue in this setting the next school year. The assignments are not varied, even though there are two different types of learners in the classroom. The high-achieving students are given the same assignments as the gifted. If the rigor is too much for non-identified students, the parents ask to have the teachers make accommodations rather than perhaps coming to the conclusion that the classroom atmosphere is not the best placement for this particular student. The services for the gifted are purely academic, and the expectation is to complete the work. The more work and assignments that are assigned the better the program is thought to be. Due to the fact that some campuses and/or grade levels on some campuses do not have identified gifted and talented students, this classroom's routines and expectations are then carried out to meet the needs of only the high-achieving students. In most classrooms the expectations for the classroom only meet the needs of the high achiever, and those few identified students' needs are not provided for in the scheme of the school year. Students who are assigned to this particular class must meet the criteria that is set according to the building principal at each campus.

Caring teachers who are valued by the community teach students in these classrooms. When searching for teachers to interview for this research, I found only four teachers in the entire district who held a gifted and talented endorsement. One teacher is assigned to kindergarten while the others taught in grades two through fifth. The teacher of kindergarten does not identify students until mid school year. Then the school is required to begin to offer services to those identified. This past school year was the first time for students in the kindergarten grade to remain for a full day of instruction. This has now allowed the kindergarten teachers in the district to focus on one set of students rather than the two half-day sessions of students that were at school. The process of gathering the required qualitative materials has also allowed the teachers to take a longer view at the work samples and make an educated evaluation about each individual student and his or her abilities.

The district has been proactive in helping the parents of the identified gifted to form a parent group. This group began three years ago and has steadily increased in membership. It has grown to have a strong voice in the programs developed for the children. The district has assigned the gifted and talented program under the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Academic Specialist for the district who oversees the time schedule as well as the testing and referral process. The Gifted Advocacy Group for Pearland Independent School District asked many questions over this past year as it strived to understand why each school has a different focus for accommodating the needs of the gifted learner. It was sometimes communicated that some schools did not have a gifted program for the students. This of course, caused alarms to ring because of the state mandate that all students labeled gifted were to receive

such services. This misconception of what services for the gifted look like and how they were being designed at each campus has since led the eight elementary principals to begin to analyze what programs should exist. They want to ensure that each campus is calling the program by the same name, and most importantly, that each school offers the program. This also goes back to the fact that each building principal needs to communicate with his or her staff about the district's expectations as well as his or her own specific expectations. All teachers should be able to communicate knowledgeably when asked by a community member about what services are being offered to a child who is labeled gifted. The district was scheduled to have a visit by the District Effectiveness Compliance, (DEC), in December of 2003. This event certainly brought to the elementary principals the awareness of the need to accurately explain the gifted program and services offered to the students of the district. The meetings began in May 2003, and continued throughout the summer months with each principal having input, and most importantly, developing an understanding of the importance of why gifted students need to have a program that best services their individual needs. In September 2003, the district was notified that due to budget constraints placed upon the Texas Education Agency, the District Effectiveness Compliance visit was canceled.

The overall benefit of this consortium of principals from the eight campuses is the use of common program names for the services provided. Some of the campuses were calling the gifted and talented class talent pool while others called it the accelerated program. Later the group of principals agreed upon a common name for the class, and concluded that if there is only one kindergarten student and two second graders identified, then the program can become a pull-out situation so these three students in the

building can meet and have instruction in areas that best meet their needs. The district is moving forward with the creation to best serve the identified gifted and talented in the elementary grades due to the parent input and most importantly, to the need to better serve our children who must have their instructional day look and feel differently than other students. After all, research shows that our gifted individuals do in fact, think and feel differently than their peers.

THE PARTICIPANTS

The study relied upon educators in the district servicing students in grades kindergarten through fifth. The teachers interviewed were located in four schools that service these particular grade levels. The principal interviewed was located in an elementary school in the center of town. The Pearland area has grown dramatically each school year for the past three years with the district adding over one thousand students each school year. The location of the schools provided a variety of demographic differences in students and the programs that are available for the students. Teacher qualifications also were a primary factor in determining which school building would be utilized for interviews. The district does not have a large amount of teachers holding a gifted and talented endorsement in the elementary school level. There were only four in the elementary school setting that could be interviewed. While searching for participants I did find two more teachers with a gifted and talented endorsement, but they are educators in the high school level servicing grades nine through twelve. Two participants interviewed represented the school district and were housed at the Educational Service Center Annex. This building houses the instructional team for the many programs that help all campuses regardless of grade levels. Regular and special education specialists as

well as the technology department that has an application focus for integrating into the curriculum are housed there.

The principal chosen for the interviews has a strong instructional background. This principal has been integral in the establishment of the dialogue for change in the programming options for the gifted students. The location of the school was also desirable due to the school being in the center of town. This allows a wide sampling of demographics in the various ethnicity of populations that have chosen this town as their home. The school has a growing number of low socio-economic students as well as affluent families moving into newly developed subdivisions. This variety of students allows this building to have many programming options to help students obtain a prescribed and successful educational experience.

The district personnel interviewed allowed the researcher to begin to understand the programming and the development of the gifted programming options that are being developed for the students. The Advanced Academic Specialist gave details to help the researcher understand the development of the changes in servicing the gifted students in the elementary school level. The background and experience that she held helped to show the disparity or rather the differences of her previous school district when compared with Pearland Independent School District. This allowed an understanding of the importance that a district's vision or as the interview shows, a goal that one principal can have to push for services on one campus. The Executive Director for Curriculum and Instruction provides staff development and the overall perspective for the district's goal of programming options for the gifted. This position oversees the professional development that is provided for the teachers each year. This position also coordinates

the dialogues and discussions between all campus administrators, parents and community members. The Executive Director also oversees the Advanced Academic Specialist's role in implementing the goals set forth by the Board of Trustees through the district's improvement plan. This role has many facets in the road of educational improvement and is critical for developing and also maintaining cohesive programming options for the many courses in a school district. The parents and community members work together with the school district to provide training in order to improve programming options being offered to their patrons.

THE INTERVIEWS

This study includes two types of participants. First are those who hold GT endorsements which is university credit, and second are those who hold the six- hour state required certification earned from a school district for receiving seat time.

GIFTED AND TALENTED ENDORSEMENT PARTICIPANT #1

Shadycrest Elementary School nestles within a neighborhood off the increasingly busy County Road 518. The neighborhood that surrounds the school is filled with twenty-year-old homes that have play equipment in the backyards and mini-vans parked in the drives. Sprinkled throughout the neighborhood are homes on larger lots that are thirty-five to forty years old and are beautiful with well-manicured yards and luxury cars parked in front. The school opened in 1970, and is the only school in the district to boast about receiving an exemplary rating for seven years in a row. The current principal is in her third year as the school leader. She brings seven years experience with her to this position. The campus serves seven hundred students in grades pre-kindergarten through fourth.

Upon entering the building, I found myself in a large hallway with a newly constructed reception area. A pleasant, cheerful woman greeted me immediately. She seemed to know why I was there, and presented me with an identification badge to wear along with a map highlighted to show the location of the teacher's room that I was to visit. Because of the age of the school I quickly noticed some obvious additions to the building. Its hallways were long, and the structure changed as I walked. The new materials used varied as I proceeded down the hall. In the halls I saw children in straight lines moving from one activity to another. One class was in a line waiting for turns to drink from a water fountain. The teacher smiled and greeted me as I walked past, and I commented on the well-behaved class. One student said, "Thank you for the compliment; we get an extra point." Faces beamed.

As I entered the classroom, the teacher sat at a kidney-shaped table in the kindergarten classroom at Shadycrest Elementary School. She had just returned to the classroom from taking her students to their physical education class in the recreation area of the school. A Diet Coke aluminum can was in one hand wrapped with a colorful napkin while a pen was held in the other. A collection of pocket folders stacked near her looked used with some corners frayed and bent. She had one folder opened and was writing a note on the piece of paper that was stapled to the inside of front cover. She said, "It is Tuesday, and this is the day I send home their work and my comments to their parents. It takes a bit of time, but I find that my parents really appreciate the communication."

I agreed with her that communication is an important component to the teaching process. As I settled into a chair across from her, I looked around. The classroom was

decorated with bright and cheerful colors. It was divided into stations with the names of each station on a tag board with an illustration. The computer center had six computers that were on, and screens displayed the home pages. The chairs were small and were all neatly pushed in front of each computer while they waited to welcome students. The alphabet chart was displayed on the wall at an appropriate height so that the young students could easily touch each letter as they familiarized themselves with the various letters. In the center of the room was a rug that had enormous red circles as the main design. I sat and could envision the students finding their spots in order to have a book read to them or to view a chart for the poem of the day. There was a homemaking center with the wooden kitchen and the table and chairs. The coat rack was child's size and was filled with aprons, suit jacket, and hats. A battered, very used-leather brief case was leaning next to the little kitchen sink. The block center was on shelves with tubs holding the various blocks that students use. The areas were neat, and the items that are used in the various centers were placed in their proper places. I thought this teacher's classroom appeared to be very well organized.

The room had one wall that opened to a hallway that had cabinets. From this opening I could hear sounds from another classroom. She commented that they shared a restroom that was housed in the middle of the open hallway. This was a first grade classroom. Reading instruction must have been occurring with the sounds of six-year-olds practicing letters and practicing the sounds they make with initial and final consonants. She said that when her students are in the classroom, she never hears the first graders. She is quite certain though that the first graders hear her students when they are in the classroom, especially when the students are in their favorite workstations.

As I began to explain why I had requested this interview, I could sense her apprehension with the process. She commented that she had never been questioned about her views for someone conducting research. She then said that she really did not feel as though she could help me since she was only a kindergarten teacher. Then we both laughed, knowing that the kindergarten teacher is the most important teacher in a child's education. After all, most people who begin their educational careers having the opportunity to begin in kindergarten usually remember their kindergarten teacher vividly.

This teacher has been in education for nineteen years. She laughed after she had to pause and count using her fingers to state the amount of years she had been an educator and added, "I am getting old." She commented that she had always had identified gifted and talented students placed in her homeroom during the years of teaching. Her experience has included kindergarten for the past three years with the previous sixteen years divided between eight years spent teaching in the first grade, four years in the second grade, and four years in third grade. She said that she was asked to move to kindergarten because of her early childhood certification, and because the principal, at that time, needed a certified teacher. She accrued experience during her student teaching assignment in kindergarten, and she really did not feel that was where she wanted to spend her time because of the age of the children. She then began her career in first grade because the students were a bit more independent, and she really never thought she would return to children who had never had the experience of a formal school setting. Then she smiled, tilted her head, and said, "But, when your principal says that next year you need to teach kindergarten, you say yes and when can I have the teaching materials that I will need to review over the summer break." She then quickly

clarified that she loves the grade level and now that the district has instituted full day kindergarten instruction, she is very happy and sees such tremendous growth in her students each day.

She shared that she received her endorsement from The University of St. Thomas many years ago. She began to calculate the exact amount of years, and then estimated she had completed the training about twelve years ago. Although she was teaching third grade at the time, this endorsement would allow her the opportunity to teach the talent pool class. This class would contain identified students as well as the students who had the highest percentages in the areas of language arts and mathematics from scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) standardized tests that students would take during their second grade year. The teacher who had always been assigned to this group was going to retire in approximately three years. She decided that having this class would be a good change for her career development. She smiled and shared that at that time she knew no one in the grade level or in the school had acquired the required hours necessary for teaching this class. She then looked down and giggled. I felt as if she was sharing some long harbored secret as to how she had managed to acquire the talent pool class in her particular grade level.

She said that she likes working with bright students and really likes the type of parent support that this student brings to the classroom. She then smiled and began to talk about one of the students she had and the boundless energy that he displayed within the classroom. She explained, “He had such a hard time sitting and completing his work each day. He would take home a stack of work and return the next day with all of it completed. I always wonder what is the magic about a student completing their work at

their home?” I wondered how she was certain that the student had actually completed the required work. I envisioned a parent completing all of the work while the student played an electronic game or even was asleep for the night.

I then posed the question about the amount of hours that she had received in the area of social and emotional development training. She really had to think, and I sensed that she did not know or perhaps could not characterize her training into course subjects. After a pause, she looked down at the piece of paper with the questions that were being discussed and said, “It has been several years since I attended the classes. I really cannot remember the different classes or the topics covered.” She began to calculate using her daughter’s age to help her remember the dates of attendance. She recalled some of the workshops that she has attended in order to receive the required six-hour annual updates each year. She could not remember the presenter, but thought that it was social and emotional development. She placed her hands together and began to rub her thumbs with one another. She looked as if she was trying to recall the training opportunities that she has attended and to recall if any were of the nature about which I was questioning her. She talked about one professor that she really liked at St. Thomas, but she could not recall the name of the woman. She recounted the course, and spoke highly of the projects and the work that she was able to bring back to the classroom. I asked her to explain some of the projects, and she talked about curricular issues, implementation of research strategies, and ways to move the students faster through the curriculum. The topics were not in the realm of social and emotional development.

Noise began in the hallway and another teacher’s head popped into the doorway and announced that the students were back from their physical education class. The

respondent thanked the teacher and turned back to me and asked if she had been of any help. I thanked her for her time and left the classroom.

GIFTED AND TALENTED ENDORSEMENT PARTICIPANT #2

The second interview occurred at another elementary school in Pearland Independent School District. C. J. Harris Elementary sits in close proximity to the previous school, but it is a newer school. This building opened its doors in the mid 1990s. Entering the building evoked a feeling of excitement as I saw immediately the library. Glass walls allowed me to view its extensive collection of books, computer stations, and seating areas to host students working on independent projects or to help facilitate faculty meetings.

The office reception area was off to the left of the main hallway. The receptionist was friendly and quickly prepared a nametag and verbally guided me to the room where the teacher was waiting for me. As I walked down the hallway towards the classroom areas, a class was moving towards an activity past the library and office area. The students were smiling and moving quietly down the main hallway. Their teacher complimented their good behavior, and their smiles broadened and chests puffed with the pleasure that they were caught being simply great.

As I approached the classroom where the teacher was assigned, I noticed that the classrooms in that wing of the hallway were empty of children. The teacher greeted me, and we sat down at a rectangular table in the front part of the room. She explained that the entire grade level was attending either a music class or physical education class for the next forty-five minutes. The chairs in which we sat were sized for children, and I found myself squirming to fit comfortably. I noticed that her desk had an adult rolling

chair, but that she chose to sit in a small chair at this alternative instructional site. She appeared to be quite comfortable, and I wondered how long she actually sat at this location throughout the school day.

After the introductions and explanation of why I was asking these particular questions, we began the interview process. She seemed nervous, but after my explanation that she was one of only four teachers in the district who held endorsements in gifted and talented education, she seemed to feel more comfortable about why I had chosen to interview her.

I began with asking about the amount of teaching experience that she has acquired. Although this teacher holds a total of twenty-five years of teaching experience, she commented that, "I began teaching this type of classroom nine years ago." When I asked her why she became interested in the gifted and talented classroom, she explained that she knew that the teacher who had been assigned this particular grouping was planning to retire. "Well, actually, I became involved in studying about them before that because I knew that our gifted and talented teacher was retiring and at that time, the state had not come out with so many required hours or anything so I went and got my endorsement. I thought I would be more likely to get to teach it than someone who didn't have it."

I found her statement that the state had not formulated too many required hours to be rather unsettling. It appeared this was her way to get the top group without having to truly understand the gifted learner. The fact that an educator would quickly acquire an endorsement in a short amount of time is not the caliber or the best model of life learning that we try to teach our children. "I had one full university course of social and

emotional,” she continued. “It was a wonderful course. I’ve had several of the six - clock-hour-training courses, but the university course was the most in depth. She was wonderful. The six-hour workshops, quite a few of them I’ve been involved with, have been offered through the district with Denise Petri or with someone they’ve brought in. I did go to one last spring given by the lady from A&M, and she was fantastic. I think they do a great job in the six hours, but you know it is still six hours. This is one area that I think I knew less about when I started my college work. I was like everyone else, and I know how people feel about the gifted and talented student; they are just ‘hotsy-totsy’, they think they are the greatest, they think they are so wonderful, they think they are so special. Learning their social and emotional problems changed the way I thought about them, and it made me an advocate of the program. I would go out and tell the regular teachers that this stereotyped concept was not true, that these children have special problems, and that we must consider this.” I then asked her to explain what types of characteristics she had to change in the teachers who did not understand the gifted learner. “Teachers think the class with gifted students is the easiest class to have. The children all make good grades and behave perfectly.” I asked her why this perception is incorrect. She smiled and commented that those that have had experience with gifted students know that they can be quite challenging.

I then asked her about some of the topics that she remembered. She began recalling some of the topics covered in the training and related those she has found necessary to address in the classroom. “Their perfectionism, self esteem issues, and behavior are issues I focus on most”, she said. She then separated the difference between the gifted and talented students and the rest of the classroom’s student profile. “So many

of the gifted students are not the perfect, little academic, high achievers that make the classroom heaven. Most gifted and talented students are not that wonderful, perfect student in the classroom.” I then pushed to find out what kind of characteristics she finds most often describes her gifted students from her regular students. Once again she named their emotional outbursts, their not turning in their work, and their lack of organizational skills. These characteristics were to her the most frustrating. I asked her how she helps the gifted student to compensate for these characteristics. She replied that she tries to provide more individual attention and seeks parental help.

When I asked her how other teachers respond to her upon discovering that she teaches the gifted, she again discussed her training. She completely avoided the question. “In the college course I took, it went more into the data and research involving the gifted, and the different psychologists. And I think one thing I got out of my college experience, one thing I felt from all of those professors, was that these students absolutely, definitely need to work with students on their own intellectual level more often than not. This is very hard on them emotionally when they are the only gifted child in a classroom. It makes them different. Separated from other gifted students makes them feel weird, and usually, by middle school, junior high anyway, they will drop out of this rigorous program. They will become underachievers for that reason. I’ve heard the comparison made that it is like an average person trying to work with someone who has a fifty to sixty IQ asking someone with 130 IQ to work with someone with just an average IQ. That was why I was a proponent of the talent pool, not because I thought all the children in there were gifted, but because the gifted ones had been assigned to a rigorous class and the high achievers also placed in this class would hopefully learn. Having the high

achievers placed with the gifted and talented, I think that is a key to their social and emotional development.” I again asked her how other teachers respond to her when they find out she teaches a class with identified gifted students. She said that they smile and respond that I have an easy job.

I then asked her about the strategies she uses to deal with meeting the needs of the perfectionist or the underachiever in the classroom. She said, “I think they should have a course in classroom management, and that is where some of this would come in. Some of them come in not thinking that a first grader is ever going to use a bad word or ever going to hit someone. Others come in thinking they are socially and emotionally more advanced than they are, and I think it is the same thing. If they (teachers) had a whole semester of classroom management, it would be very important training.” I mentioned the two topics again, and she stated that the classroom management course would help students to take risks and complete the assignments that are assigned.

She thought that some of the topics covered during the social and emotional training have not been at all beneficial, and began by discussing psychology. “Well, the psychologists,” she began. “A lot of in depth studies were laying the groundwork, but I don’t need to quote someone. I’m sure if I had to that would, I guess, help, but a lot of the things in that area, I don’t feel like as a teacher of elementary who was going to teach gifted children, I needed more. I did get more of it in the other two, but some of that was not beneficial. I think most of the other was, in some way or another, beneficial. Some of it there is nothing we can do about. For instance, the social stigma in society, or in school among their peers. You can try and try to help them realize that it is okay to be smart, and that some day they are going to be glad that they are smart, but peers are much

more important at that fifth and sixth grade level and even at the high school level. My experience with the gifted student is like they either go off to the deep end to be a nerd or blend in to be the perfect student. It's like if they are going to be gifted they decide to be total and not make any friends or they give up that (giftedness) in order to make friends with others." The respondent then looked across the room and seemed to recall one such student who did not make friends very easily. This pause in the conversation allowed me to also to remember a student in the past who had such a difficult time relating to his age peers, but knew every adult in the building and so enjoyed conversing with the most educated of the adults working at the school.

She then looked back at me and continued with, " In a lot of their emotional dealings you can be there for them, but they just have to work through it. And in things from home, things like parents who are very pushy and who expect too much of them. You can only do so much. I've had more parents tell me they just don't know why he's such a perfectionist. We don't expect too much. He had an *A* minus in band. You don't push him enough. They don't realize because they are also perfectionists, most of them."

I asked her if she had found any of the topics covered during the training too difficult to implement with her classroom. She replied by discussing her difficulty with assigning grades. "The grading system makes it difficult to really rate each student, especially with the gifted. When you must put a grade on it, then you are not able to work within their emotional situation. If they are working on their completed task, no matter what characteristic that they have, then you cannot go with that. I've always thought about a pull out program and if that would be the solution to helping the students." I asked her what type of activities could the pull out program provide that the

classroom does not. She looked away and smiled and stated that she really had not thought about that.

She then asked me if I had attended a training session on the Independent Investigative Method. “Have you done any of that? I shared that I had the training while teaching in the Clear Creek Independent School District. I told her that I found it worked beautifully with gifted students as well as with special education students. The program helped students to organize their questions about topics in a way that they could then share more easily with others. She responded with, “Wouldn’t that be wonderful for a pull out program? I mean you could just have them. I just think it would be perfect. If they could come once, twice a week and continue to work on that same project and have the time and attention of a teacher that really understood their needs.”

Continuing with the pull out program topic, I commented that having a group that consisted of multi-grades would help on most campuses. Classroom teachers would place students together based on topic study and combine some grades. That would be like having support groups on your campus.” The respondent said, “I think multi-age groups for gifted are another way to go. Like kindergarten with first, second, third, fourth because they could really feed off each other, and especially with a pullout program. They are in the minority, we have a grading system; we have a time limit, and I know when they get to junior and high school, I realize that we cannot meet their social and emotional needs. We need to give them more time to build their self-esteem and try to get them away from their perfectionism or the feeling of not being able to accomplish what they want to because they don’t want to do just a little.”

I moved on to see about her views on topics or strategies taught in the training that may be too difficult to implement with a gifted classroom, and I asked the teacher which she considered to be the hardest to work with. She immediately replied, “Time limits, I don’t guess there is not any class even in the high school level that would have only gifted students. Even the AP classes do not offer what these students need. There is just not the time, and there are too many students. One of the social and emotional ideas is that a university professor comes out and teaches courses just for them or they get to go there for a special course like music.” She then began to explain the courses that were offered in Clear Creek for the fourth and fifth graders. I explained to her about how fourth and fifth graders identified GT would be bussed to either the lunar planetary, Armand Bayou Nature Center, the University of Houston, or the Space Center where they would sign up for courses. They would spend their Wednesdays doing that, and the beauty of that was that the district had eighteen elementary schools in the program, and these children got to see others like themselves. These odd ducks would finally find out there were other odd ducks just like them. The respondent then said, “ And they would realize that there was a professor who cares enough to spend time with me. Perhaps they could realize they may just be ahead of their time, and that maybe they are O.K. Those kinds of programs are needed.” Very good, very lasting relationships formed during those years, but it is very expensive.

We talked about ways that social and emotional training could be improved. She commented that, “I really think that if it must be called GT, but I’ve always thought that all teachers should be trained and get at least six hours. Everyone needs the social and emotional training because you never know when you are going to have one, and you will

always have a student that is unidentified. A lot of the students are not going to be identified. We will miss all that leadership, the music, and the arts. I don't know if other schools will have the talent pool waiver, but we are moving toward just putting them back into the classroom here, so everyone needs to be aware of this stuff."

Grouping issues were then discussed. The respondent shared about the program at Rustic Oak Elementary. "Rustic Oak had it when Janet Penner (the original principal) was there. Gifted students were put two to a class." She continued with the description of the students spread among the grade level so that all the classes had to be at a challenging pace as well as provide needed modifications. She shared that the teachers on this campus really had to work hard to meet the needs of the diverse learners in the school.

We talked about some of the changes that have occurred within her classroom based on knowledge acquired from her training in social and emotional. "Well, it absolutely changed my opinion totally almost about the gifted students." She then talked about how the gifted were perfectionists and this is an area that she also sees is a problem for the students that are high achievers. She commented that there are some of the same problems that are apparent in the two types of groupings of students. She commented that they need more help in areas than average children do not need help. "It made me, since I hadn't taught any gifted before although I had taught top reading classes, I started getting a feel of them. It helped me in my expectations of them. Maybe I lowered my expectations in some areas like in work habits, or ability to cope. If I had not had that training I may not have known to do this because they can act so self-confident outwardly that you just think they know it. I think it helped me come to the classroom to begin

teaching gifted children through a whole different door with a different perspective.

When they would get so upset, I tried to put less pressure on final products and that is something that gets me about teaching in the average classroom.”

She then shared that she is teaching a classroom with more average students than gifted and talented labeled children. “This is my first year teaching in an average classroom, and that thinking, that average students do not do the type of thinking that the gifted do is wrong.” She then stated that she had assigned some problems to previous classes of gifted students that required the students to do some sorting and predicting. “Yesterday I kept trying to get them to come up with questions that we would ask about a table we were working on or a graph. They just wanted to give an answer.” She then recalled her class of gifted and talented and how they would enter her classroom in the beginning of the year with that type of thinking sharing the one right way, there was only one right answer. “I feel like if nothing else, I really worked on that with the gifted students. There is more than one answer. There is more than one way to do something, and his idea or her idea or their idea is just as good as your idea, and the final answer isn’t always what is important. Letting them deal with the process and letting them enjoy dealing with the process whether it be investigative research or just group work, I really enjoyed with them, but that was difficult.” She then looked back at the table and paused, “That was social emotional. You had to get the right click. Either one student would take over the discussion completely or there was one who just sat and shared nothing so you, the teacher, would have to work with that. When the administration put together the right group, it clicked and was a lot of fun. Mainly, it is what you expect of them and trying to deal with them on their own level. As a teacher, my job was to build their self-

esteem. The problem is that they are smart enough to know when they are not doing well so you've got to get them past that to realize that it is okay."

I then asked if she could share any other insights she may have about social and emotional training that we had not touched upon. "I would love to see, and I know we've been trying at the first grade level with the identification process, and it is so difficult to identify the underachieving gifted." This response showed the respondent referencing an area that dealt with identification and assessment. I sensed that she really did not understand the topic of social and emotional. The interview left me with the impression after returning to the data that I had to feed the respondent the topic strands associated with social and emotional development. There were many times that I had to prompt the respondent and guide her to the area that was being discussed.

GIFTED AND TALENTED ENDORSEMENT PARTICIPANT #3

The third teacher with a gifted and talented endorsement also teaches on the C. J. Harris campus. I returned to this campus on a different day to discuss her thoughts and implementations of social and emotional development. The third participant received her gifted and talented endorsement from The University of St. Thomas. This teacher has had seven years of experience with all of the years completed at this campus. She teaches two separate classes of fourth grade English Language Arts and Social Studies. One of these classes has identified gifted and talented students. "This class keeps me on my toes," she says and smiles. She then adds that the group seems to really push her and the other teacher on the team who teaches mathematics and science.

I began by asking her when she first began teaching gifted and talented students. "I have always had the group that has the gifted students since I began my teaching

career. She explained that she and another teacher are the only teachers on the campus with an endorsement. She stated that she thought all teachers of the gifted were required to have such training, and that is why she had the students. She then laughed and said that she is one of the few who really likes the gifted students. She explained that their sense of humor and the way they can understand concepts so quickly makes her job fun.

I was curious about how many hours of social and emotional development she had acquired, and she said that at the university all the courses seemed to mainly involve the curriculum issues. She then stated that she had received training on social and emotional development at a workshop to gain the required six hours of training that is required each year. She said that she remembered the training really opened her eyes to the topics that she felt were already in practice within her classroom.

She then began to talk about one of the topics she received in the six-hour annual update training. This topic was perfectionism. She said that she was surprised to learn that perfectionists are the world's best procrastinators. She laughed and then looked at me and said, "I am the best procrastinator in the world." She then began to tell about a student who is currently in her classroom who has the worst time getting his projects completed. She then looked at an area in her room that most likely was his area. I turned to see papers stuffed inside a desk and writing utensils and pieces of post-it notes haphazardly positioned on the floor. The area had the look of gifted and talented student habitat. She continued with her story, "He seems to have an idea of what the final project should include, but when he gets closer to the final date that it is due, he then changes his presentation style to make the project more understandable by his classmates." She

stated that the workshop on social and emotional development helped her understand the perfectionist tendencies and has helped her to best instruct this student.

I asked her what strategies she has used with this particular student to help with this type of behavior. She explained using a strategy of making him plan his final project in such a way that he understands that he must turn this exact and original plan into the final project. She also uses a time system so that he must complete portions within a time period. She admits that she does allow some extra time, but that she keeps him on a strict timeline. She laughed and said, “This is a work in progress.”

When I asked her about some other topics that she remembered from the training, she paused and could not recall any other topics. This causes concern in that someone who has an endorsement, who is an advocate for the gifted, but who does not have the necessary information that is critical for the gifted and talented student to be educated in the public schools. I asked myself how could a person with such a limited background be an effective advocate?

She then began to talk about books that she remembered that were shared in the workshop. I mentioned to her the use of bibliotherapy. She then looked down at the table and commented, “overexcitabilities (OEs).” I asked her what she remembers about that topic. She could not recall any of the individual overexcitabilities, but returned to her current use of literature and how she finds this helps her students.

She commented that one thing that has stood out in her mind since completing the training is the difference between emotional age as compared with chronological age. She said that this causes some of the students to be needy and require more attention than the other students in the classroom. She then returned to talk about the OEs, and the fact

that so many students are diagnosed with Attention Deficient/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and how this may be incorrect. She then stated “I walk through the lunchroom some days and am appalled at how many students do not eat lunch.” She shared how she stops and asks if they need to charge for a lunch. The students will reply that they have money, they are just not hungry.

She looked off to classroom and paused. She then shared that she remembered a student that she had the previous year who was very active. She smiled and said, “He had such a hard time settling down and would quickly jump up and pace around the room.” She allowed this behavior because after he walked a bit, he could then sit and complete the assignment and perhaps even tackle another. Glancing at me she said, “Teachers need to know this and also to be willing to accommodate for this so that all the students are not medicated so quickly, but learn some strategies and ways to compensate for the need of movement between activities.”

I asked her what specific activities she found beneficial in the classroom, and she began by discussing the way a gifted student thinks. She added, “Taking the time to address their unique needs is most helpful.” She then commented that boys in particular have a need for additional training. “I see the boys having the most need in social and emotional development. Boys tend to stand out and having a classroom that is a safe place must be created.” She commented that other teachers need to understand that gifted boys need a place to safely have a break down so as not to cause embarrassment for their delay in emotions. She paused for a moment and said, “Not having a heart; you must have a heart and share this with the students each day.” This statement showed her understanding one of the important characteristics in teaching children.

“I see that social and emotional development is very necessary in our schools; therefore, the teacher training programs are important. Social and emotional development should be a core component in all schools and classrooms.” She talked about some of the traits that students exhibit and how those are most associated with gifted characteristics. She also stated that some of the traits are also visible in the students who have been labeled with a learning disability. “How a student ticks, that is the foundation on how you teach that student. Having an interest survey for the students. That is how you know the students; that is how you best teach them.”

I questioned her about whether she remembered any topics covered during the social and emotional training that she later discovered not beneficial. She could not recall anything specifically that she had learned during her training as not being helpful. She did comment that sometimes it is hard to find the time to do an activity that is not tied to the state required testing. Once again the time element has been mentioned as an area that impedes the topics that most help train our gifted children in the classroom.

The conversation then moved her to talk about the grading procedures that are in place for the assessing whether the students are mastering the curriculum. She said that so many projects require a grade and how to grade something that is designed to help build character causes her to not pursue such activities. She added, “Of course, the gifted will ‘pop to the top’ and see things in a more symbolic way. Regular students are so literal; the gifted bring in the more complex ideas and issues. They bring issues to a different level when compared with the regular student.” She stated that knowing the students and really understanding the students and the different levels in which they function within the classroom is so important when discussing and instructing students.

Probing her to comment further on topics she considered too difficult to implement within the classroom, she responded, “Time is the biggest factor and for some teachers how will this help the students pass the test?” She lamented about how sad it is that the teacher does not meet the needs of the child’s mind, and answers their questions about the importance of fitting into the social setting. Passing the test does not really matter. She went on to note, “The child whose needs are not being met because of a lack of connection with the school and the teacher will not be successful.” She then mentioned a comment from Jim Delisle about how a gifted student loves to learn and it is school that turns them off. She smiled and added that she makes sure that she visits any session with J. Delisle. I asked her where she sees J. Delisle. She responded that she has been fortunate to attend the Texas Association of Gifted and Talented (TAGT) when the conference is held in Houston.

Questioning her on her opinion of how social and emotional training could be improved, she replied that she valued the importance of the training after the workshop that she took in Pearland Independent School District. She stated that this should be a core training point for all teachers. She added that all teachers need this training on a yearly basis. These topics and characteristics of students need to be revisited on a yearly basis.

I probed further to learn how she considered her classroom changed based on the knowledge she gained from the social and emotional training experience. Pausing, she explained that she now uses literature in a different way. The training allowed her to look more in depth at character development and to discuss this in the student’s literature.

Questioning further, I asked her what else she could share about social and emotional development. She replied, “I think that teacher training for working with these students is important. The gifted are smart, and they know how to manipulate. They will go to unthinkable ways to make their voices heard, and also, they need to feel that they have a voice in order to feel a part of the learning environment. Training is a foundation and all teachers need to have as much as they can possibly receive. This is the only way that a school can really meet the needs of all the students.”

The interview ended when the students returned from their music class. The teacher greeted the children with a smile and walked over to the doorway. The students chattered as they moved to their desks where work was waiting for them to continue.

GIFTED AND TALENTED ENDORSEMENT PARTICIPANT #4

Jamison Middle School is the campus where the fourth respondent who holds a gifted and talented endorsement teaches. This school is centrally located and is the original middle school for the district. The school opened twenty-two years ago to serve as the campus for fifth and sixth grade students. The building is well maintained. A wooden bench that sits outside the office area has “Jaguar” etched upon it to announce the school’s mascot name. There are pillows placed on the bench with plants banked around to promote a pleasing and soothing welcome area for students and visitors. The school has two long hallways, and the office lies adjacent the visitor parking area. The office has large windows that announce the entry of anyone into the building. A receptionist printed a badge that stated my name, and the location I was visiting. Safety of the students was very important to this school as evidenced by the checking of picture identification. As I stood waiting, a parent came to eat lunch with her child. The

receptionist pulled the student's card and compared the name from the picture identification with the names listed on the registration card. I noticed how patient the visitors were with the process. As a parent, I appreciated to see that careful consideration is a part of the system so that all students and staff are safe within the building. Bright, freshly painted lockers lined one side of the hallway. The hall is bright, and the tile floors reflect the light filtering in from outside. They shine and are free from debris. Motivational posters line the hallway with inspirational quotes. The bright colors from the various posters help to create a pleasant atmosphere.

Turning the corner at the end of the long hallway, I saw the library. There was a large window allowing a peek into this area. Members of the Paint Club had painted an image on the window. The illustration was of a child wearing bright clothing sitting on top of a globe. There were books stacked next the globe, and the character was smiling. The window opposite had yellow stars and the words, "Reading helps make dreams come true." This artwork was student produced.

Moving away from the library, cartoon characters drawn by the students were mounted on a cork strip that ran completely down the length of the hallway. Large manila pieces of paper had images that completely filled the size of the paper. The students had also drawn a background so that the paper was completely covered with color. The medium used varied from crayon to markers, but each piece had been colored in and had the appearance that a great amount of effort to produce quality had gone into this project. The mounting of the artwork in the hallway makes me think that the school's philosophy reflects an upper elementary influence.

The teacher's classroom was at the end of the second hallway. The classroom has desks that have the desktop and chair attached as one piece. The desks are pushed together in groups of four and five. In one corner is a dry erase board with the day's objectives and assignments posted. The basket under the student desks have books, binders, and planners stacked with some having papers stuffed in between the necessary materials while other desks have an organized stack of books and papers. The tops of each desk hold a novel. Mead notebooks are also visible with some opened with a pencil placed in the center. The room looks as if the students were in the middle of reading their novels when they were called away to another subject. The teacher explained that they were in their elective period. That particular class was in their nine-week rotation of drama. She said that this was a new elective for them this nine-week period, and they were very happy to be in that activity. She smiled and said that some had quite the talent for dramatic outbursts. She looked at one set of desks and said that one child in particular needed to learn to control her expressive reactions to situations that she encountered throughout the school day.

We sat in the corner of the room where her desk and file cabinet was placed to form a teacher center. On her desk she had literature books and student journals opened. A tablet with hand written statements and sketches were being created for a future lesson. The area had books and reference books to help the teacher meet the Texas Essential Knowledge Skills (TEKS) for this grade level and course. The classroom was located on the interior side of the hallway so there were no windows. The room had brown chalkboards. This spoke to the age of the building.

The teacher had used colored chalk to diagram parts of speech in a sentence. The wall first visible upon entering the room had colorful posters mounted. There were a variety of messages and hints. One poster displayed the writing process. Sentence strips were on another wall with vocabulary words written on them. The word wall was organized into alphabetical order, and the words were written with font large enough to be easily seen from any part of the room. There were pictures and poems written by the students covering another wall. The poems were a collection with some anagrams and other types of poetry. The illustrations were bright and wonderfully childlike.

I began the interview by questioning the teacher about when she first became involved in teaching gifted and talented students. “I first began to teach identified gifted students in 1997,” she replied. She currently teaches fifth grade students English Language Arts, and before coming to Pearland I.S.D., she taught in the WAVE gifted magnet program in Clear Creek I.S.D. Initially she taught sixth graders and from there moved to the Ninth Grade Center at Clear Lake High School. She was the gifted and talented coordinator for that campus. She lives in Pearland and wanted to teach in the same area where she lives. She also wanted to gain experience with teaching younger students. The move to fifth grade has been a new learning experience for her. “The children are still independent, yet exhibit childlike reactions and adoration for their teachers.”

When I questioned her about how many hours in social and emotional training development she holds, she said that she received her training for social and emotional development through a course at Texas A&M University with the ICE program. She also remembered taking workshops at the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented

(TAGT) two years ago. “That was the focus area and most workshops were designed to help teachers in this area,” she added. All of the courses that she took for the basic training of the gifted and talented endorsement were university-designed courses.

I probed further to learn about topics covered during the social and emotional training she had received. The topics that she remembered from the training concerned the uniqueness of the gifted learner. “I was so surprised about their extreme behaviors when compared with those of the regular population.” She mentioned that the labels that the students receive sometimes make them outcasts in the school setting. “I also noticed an increase in their sensitivity.” She shared how she has really seen this with the fifth graders that she currently teaches this year. The children seem to be at one end or the other with behavior.

When I questioned her about topics covered during the training that she thinks have not been beneficial in the classroom, she said that all the topics covered in the training have helped her in the classroom. “I have used various techniques based on the varying levels of students that I have taught. The topics in the training have served well from high school students to the elementary students. The training has been extremely important. Without this training teachers would not have the knowledge that there needs to be the allowance for differences in the students in these classrooms. If the teachers do not recognize this difference, the students will not be successful. Having the training was felt to be a requirement for any teacher in charge of the gifted learner. I have seen Jim Delisle speak at the TAGT conference, and I walked out thinking about how incredible he must be with students.” This was the second respondent who identified a name of a source of expertise that should be a part of training. She shared her experience in the

high school setting of denying waivers to remove students from the Pre-AP courses at the ninth grade center adding, “The teachers would be furious with me for not granting them their wish to deny an extremely gifted student to be removed. These teachers need to have the training so that they better understand why the students show their reluctance to sometimes follow in the course activity.” She smiled and said that she would have to provide some training to these individuals so that students could stay in the course and also have some of their unique needs met.

The topics covered have all been beneficial to her in the classroom with the curriculum except for support groups. There are not enough identified in the grade level, and she recalled in the training that the facilitator of a support group should not be the evaluator for the students. “I am their teacher, and I do evaluate them in their English Language Art Course.” She stated that she thinks that another person should provide support groups. She then mentioned that this would be a great job for the counselors in a building to provide. She then said that she tells parents about the survival guide for teens, and about the one for parents which helps them to understand their child. These books have proven to help answer many questions parents and students have about the issues associated with giftedness. She then looked at the desk top and said, “Having support groups for the students would be too difficult to implement in the classroom.” I gained an understanding in that the respondent felt this is an important strategy, but that she has not found a way to incorporate that into her classroom. She then continued that the district goals have prevented her from implementing too much focus in to the area. “There is so much pressure to meet the district goal of all schools meeting the

commendable performance level. You hope that you are meeting the needs of the students, but I'm not always sure."

I eagerly questioned her regarding her opinion about improving the social and emotional training program for teachers, and she immediately suggested that social and emotional training be made mandatory throughout the district. She recalled that in Clear Creek I.S.D. the training provided did not include this requirement. She added that she thought that Pearland was the same because when looking at the state plan, it is not a mandatory training component. "Teachers need to be updated, and this training would provide the relationship building components that are critical in the classroom settings. "Teachers do not choose workshops with a lot of theory; they want hands-on activities that they can implement in their classrooms the next day." She shook her head and sighed. She then said that teachers need the theory and the background to best serve the students. Cute and hands-on activities do not always help meet the need of the gifted learner.

The alarm went off on her computer to signal that she needed to meet the children in the hall. We left the classroom, and down the hall I saw a line of students approaching the area of her classroom. The students were smiling, and she smiled when she saw them. Her respect and admiration for her students was evident upon her face.

SIX HOUR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT #1

Silverlake Elementary School lies in the western part of the sleepy, little town of Pearland, Texas. The school services an area of development that has grown so rapidly that the plot of land that was to house a middle school became instead, another elementary school. The area borders Highway 288 and services many families that

commute to downtown Houston businesses and to the Texas Medical center. The families who send their children to this school have high expectations. Both parents are most likely to be college graduates; therefore, they have the desire that their child becomes prepared for the upcoming national testing programs, and most hope that eventually, their child will be able to attend major universities across the country.

The teacher met me in the office area, and we walked to the classroom. The school is now in its sixth year of operation. The hallways are large and bright. The main hallway has the grade level halls down each side with doors at opposite ends which allows light to flow onto the freshly waxed floors. The tiles glisten with the sun's reflection. The walls have children's work mounted. The work that is displayed changes with the grade level as you walk down the hallway. There is student-produced artwork, writing samples from each grade level, and science project illustrations. These additions of the student work make the large hallway feel even more massive. The teacher walks to the second corridor intersection and turns to the left. She shares that she has moved her classroom this year. She tells of the massive job that was accomplished over the summer months. The classroom is the last one on the left side of the hallway. The first two classrooms we pass in the hallway are computer labs. She talks about how convenient it is having the computer labs in the same hallway because of the color-laser printers housed in each of the labs. The labs have printers where she can send student work, and the print jobs are completed very quickly. Her eyes twinkle as she explains that having this helps her save classroom budget money on print cartridges.

This interview began when I asked her when she first became involved in teaching gift and talented students, and she replied, "I began teaching gifted and talented

students in 1994.” She was at Lawhon Elementary when she learned that Challenger Elementary would open in 1996, and she chose to transfer there. She said that this new school would have a large amount of gifted and high-achieving students. The principal who was opening the school asked her to come and teach second grade. Her experience had been only with lower socio-economic students so she viewed this change as a challenge.

When I asked her how many hours of social and emotional development she held, she stated that she needed the background for teaching the gifted so she took the required thirty hours of awareness. Of that training she remembered taking workshop hours that were related to social and emotional development. She stated that people who she now feels really did not have a strong background in gifted and talented conducted the original training. I asked her why she felt this way. She responded that she thinks the content was not provided in the original training because she has since had more training and the focus and topics covered have been beneficial to her and her students and their parents.

Then I encouraged her to describe the topics covered during her social and emotional training. She said that in 1998, when Silverlake Elementary opened, she transferred to this school. She was approached by the principal who was opening the school because of the reputation that she had garnered based on her ability to teach the highly capable students, and due to the good rapport she establishes with her student’s parents and with the community. While at Silverlake Elementary she took a six-hour annual update course. She said that this is when she really began to understand the importance of social and emotional development in the classroom. The presenter was a principal, and taking the workshop was mainly a way to see what type of presenter her

current principal was. “I was pleasantly surprised, and I have remained in contact with this person because she makes me think and delve deeper into my relationships with students.” She stated that being in a classroom with the gifted is like being a scientist observing a student. “You are so interested in what they do academically, and in watching the great leaps they make. It is all so amazing. You also get great feedback from their parents. There is such a huge intellectual leap between first and second grades. My time is spent on challenging. The teacher keeps pushing and pushing the child academically.” At the workshop Jim Delisle was quoted, and she remembered the quiz that began the workshop with the misperceptions of the gifted students’ characteristics. I have since found every book I can and read everything that Mr. Delisle has written. “I remember walking out that Saturday afternoon realizing that you cannot teach the child’s head until you teach his heart. I had lost sight that these are children. I needed to identify their differences and celebrate that. I also realized that I needed to help these unique people identify with others in order to have a benefit on mankind. As a teacher it is more important for the teacher to work with the person rather than the mind. Many people think that teaching is just working with the mind. I find that working with the whole person is much more challenging.” This was the third participant who had mentioned J. Delisle’s name.

I then asked her about the topics that she remembers from the training that she has taken. She continued with, “There are so many different issues in social and emotional development: birth order, cultural groups, and social setting as well as peer groups. The benefit of addressing social and emotional development is the teaching of students to respect who they are. To help them know their difference and not to fear this difference.

Sometimes though, when a student has a teacher who understands that they are teaching a person and not just a mind, when the student runs into a teacher who does not understand, the student will show contempt and shut down. That is when school becomes a waste of time for the students.”

When I probed further as to how the topics covered during social and emotional training have been beneficial, she answered, “Social and emotional development has helped me understand that we must help our students develop so that we have future leaders. It is a waste of time for teachers to waste the student’s time with Texas Assessment of Knowledge Skills (the state’s accountability test). Time needs to be spent in the molding of leaders, in developing a community of respectful learners, and in dealing with our shared emotional issues.” I asked her how she does this. She shared that she develops opportunities for her students to share their learning in a cooperative setting. She identifies the strengths of her students. Areas of weakness are then targeted for continued work in order to develop. She shared that the training helped her see that some gifted students will not take risks due to the expectation that parents and teachers feel that they should be straight “A” students.

Probing the topic further, I asked her which of the topics covered during the training she considered not beneficial. “Perfectionism is an area that I had never thought of as a hindrance until the workshop. I never thought that trying to be perfect could be harmful. This inhibits our students and causes many to not take necessary risks. I have had some students as young as second grade sink into depression and give up.”

When questioned regarding what else she would like to share about social and emotional training that had not yet been discussed, she added, “Mentoring is an area that

I wish could be integrated within our school program. Multi-age groups are a start so that the students can see and visit with those who have traveled the path. This would benefit the young ones. We have begun Independent Investigative Method, which has helped the students to pursue research projects that most interest them. The librarian in our school helps to facilitate this program. The students also have the opportunity to visit and to work on their projects with other students in the grade levels so you could find a first grader in the library along side a fourth grader working on a project together. I would like to see more grade levels and schools working together. Transportation is a factor, and that is probably why it will not be a consideration. I think though, if children had the opportunity to visit with a student who has walked the road, and could offer information to show the student what lies ahead at the next level, this would help the gifted students tremendously. If the gifted know the rules of the game, then they have a great game. I have seen some of the greatest worriers in the gifted students whom I have taught.”

She continued with, “I think talking with the counselors is good, but I think the children need programs that include more than talking with a counselor. Adults who really know the gifted should be in contact and have sessions with the students. This would also help them understand what may possibly lie in their futures. The gifted notice with an adult mind, and yet respond to the situation with a child’s mind. The adult who is aware of the gifted student can help connect the reactions they observe in the gifted, and then can become really able to help our students. If students do not have this type of adult accessible to them, then their lives are distorted. That is why mentoring is so important and really is a piece that is not incorporated in our schools. In our schools now there is too much time spent on the At-Risk student and providing the necessary interventions,

and on remedial tutoring so that the needs of the gifted are not met. Each afternoon the classrooms are filled with students who are not meeting the standards so the teachers who could provide a program for the gifted are either exhausted or there is just not an available afternoon for the gifted students.”

The interview continued with her stating, “I have great ideas about programming options, but I will not leave the classroom. I love being a ‘child’ teacher, and I am not ready to go into an office to fight the games that are played at the administration level. I see a sad future for our gifted. Many teachers are strong in preparing students for the state assessment, but are not helping our gifted in achieving the necessary qualities for becoming future leaders. I also see so many teachers in the classroom who are strong, in their teaching ability, but then leave so fast to go into administration or counseling. I think it is the focus on the testing that causes them to become so frustrated. Good and creative teachers are also leaving the field because of the stress of the mandated testing. I also see so many of the students whom I have taught shutting down once out of the second grade. The strong focus on the test turns them off, and the fact that so many teachers feel that the students must keep repeating the same knowledge of the same objectives. It is amazing how many do not consider simply having their students complete a pretest so that they can move on with the lessons or perhaps, even cover a topic of interest!” This comment showed another area of the thirty hours of awareness that the participant had remembered in the curriculum area of the workshops.

The students entered the classroom and did not seem to notice that the teacher had a visitor. The room filled with children talking and sharing their report that had been the

prior activity. The teacher rose from the table and the children looked at her and then saw me. She gave them instructions and they quickly and cheerfully began their work.

SIX HOUR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT #2

The interview took place at Jamison Middle School in Pearland I.S.D. where the teacher is in her fourth year of teaching. Her classroom has windows on one side of the room, and the view out the window shows the beautiful oak trees that line the east side of the campus. In the classroom under the windows are bookshelves that are filled with novels. The spines of the books have colored dots to show their level of readability. The teacher's desk is placed in the corner of the room with a file cabinet nearby. Next to the desk is a table with computers. The screen on one computer shows the home page for the Accelerated Reading Program. The students are in groups working on a Future Problem Solving activity. The buzz of students talking and working fills this classroom with energy. The students have received the instructions needed for the next segment they must complete in their project. We sit so she can see the children while we talk. The rectangular table has a stack of spiral journals that are opened to a page with today's date. The writing starter for today is on the brown chalkboard. The board also has the day's objective, and I notice there are two different areas. One appears to be for the regular class, and the other is for this advanced class. The use of differentiation is evident in this classroom.

Upon questioning this teacher about when she first began to work with gifted and talented students, I learned that while this her fourth year to teach, it is only her second year with Pearland Independent School District. This is also her second year to teach identified gifted students in a classroom setting. "I had identified students when I taught

in College Station, but they were pulled out for gifted instruction. I like teaching this type of class, but they are rather difficult sometimes.” Then she stood up and walked around the room to be sure students were proceeding with the problem-solving activity. She returned, and we continued our conversation. I asked her how is the class difficult. She mentioned areas such as lack of organization, outbursts, and for some the inability to not blurt out answers. She looked at one particular group working and smiled.

She explained that she received the thirty hours of awareness in the fall of 2002 through the district’s Saturday training opportunities. The training for social and emotional development was a six-hour course. She has not taken any training at the university level. She also took the Future Problem Solving Training during the summer of 2003.

When I asked her to describe the topics covered during the social and emotional training she received, she recalled the social interactions that are apparent in this group of students. She shared that there are six identified students in this class, and each one has a very different personality. One student prefers to be isolated from the other students. He tries to work alone for the majority of his projects. He has a difficult time associating with others in the class. “The one thing that drives me crazy is that they all think they are correct.” She spoke about the quirks that some students exhibit and the intensity that they show about some topics. “I may be ready to move to another subject or topic and they are not ready. Questions continue to swell, and I have realized that it is that intensity and I must resort to plan B to help them move to another topic.” I asked her what in particular she does. She shared that she sometimes will adjust the lesson and spends

more time on a topic of interest or she will allow some group work to take place so that those individuals that are interested have the time to pursue that area of interest.

I asked her which of the topics covered during her training she considered to be beneficial, and she said that the most beneficial topic covered in the training was the fact that she was introduced to looking at the situation through the students' point of view. "All students are different and not created in the same mold," she said. When asked about specific activities, the respondent could not recall any that she has completed in the classroom.

She shared that she felt having social and emotional development training as a requirement for the school was a necessary component for all classroom teachers. She again stated that some students need a different way to learn, and that they are not all the same. She talked about how some students "wear their hearts on the sleeves." She then laughed and shared how some of the typical ways of managing students are not successful with the gifted and talented students. "They just do not work." The training has changed the way she sets up her classroom and the management style that she uses for the two different groups of students she teaches each day. I asked her what she has done differently since the training. She stated that she allows more movement. She also allows some students to work alone, but then will stress some cooperative settings and watch carefully so that activity is beneficial for the students and the others in the group. Responding to the writing in the journals each week has opened her eyes to what is important to the students and areas that they show excitement and willingness to explore.

We then talked about school wide strategies that help promote positive social and emotional development and the importance. She shared that some children may not have

the gifted label, but may exhibit the same behavioral issues that can be solved with strategies from the training. “The training can benefit everyone.” She looked off and began to recall Erikson’s stages of development. She emphasized that having the knowledge of the importance of the experience will help to guide teachers in dealing with their students. Helping students receive a positive experience in their development is an important part of being an educator.

The teacher had to remind the class that the noise level was growing. She did this by walking around the room and asking a question while glancing over each of the group’s final copies. A student, who is extremely gifted, shouts out, “This is a stupid idea.” She moves to his area of the room quickly and quietly, and begins to speak with the student. He is looking down and shaking his head back and forth. She bends down and says something privately to him, and he looks up and begins to talk with the other three boys in the group. “I had a name,” he shouts out again. The teacher replies, “Well, the team needs to agree upon the name before you can use that name on the project.” At this point the other three students have not said a word. They continue to just sit and stare at the student with opened mouths. The group then begins to talk and she returns to the area where I am and sits down. “He is a handful. This is what a truly gifted student is like on most days. I find that this group keeps me on my toes the entire period. I like teaching them because they have taught me so much, but some days I get so frustrated with some of the behaviors.” I asked her about specific behaviors that she encounters. She pointed to the area where the group was working that she had just encountered. She grimaced her face and said that each day brings a conflict and her ability to help bring the

students to a resolution. She shook her head and said that some days she wished that they would just learn to get along and not require her help.

When I inquired about topics that were covered during the training that she would not consider beneficial, she could not recall any of the training that had not been of benefit. I also thought that she was not able to recall many of the key components that were offered in the workshop. She stated that the training that the district has stressed this year talks about the importance of relationship building. She compared the social and emotional development training with this concept. All teachers need to know their students so that they can implement the necessary strategies to help them solve their problems.”

Probing further, I asked her if she could share something about the training that had not been discussed. She thought for a moment before she replied that her classroom management has changed due to the training in how she deals with upset students. “I have them focus and tell me the problem. I listen and then question them so they can solve the problem. Before I had this training I would have just said to go back to your desk and work.” She explained how this approach is helping the students make a plan and she is helping them develop problem-solving skills that will benefit them for life. She felt the training should be a part of every school building. The students would thrive in schools that listened and helped them to meet their needs in this difficult business of growing.

I knew that the students were reaching the end of their group activity by the increase of talking and the volume of their voices. We ended our conversation, and the teacher resumed her position in the front of the classroom. When the teacher reached the

spot in front, the classroom became quiet and the students looked up to her. She then began to explain the next assignment that they were complete on their problem solving activity.

SIX HOUR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT #3

This classroom teacher also teaches at Jamison Middle School. She is a first-year teacher on a team that has identified gifted students. She does not teach that class, but has two students who are new to the district in her homeroom, and they will receive this label during the spring referral process. The two students scored the required percentage on the fall test administration of the Cognitive Abilities Test. She shared, “Their parents requested that they stay in my homeroom because they do not think moving them to another class would be beneficial for them at this point of the school year.”

The classroom is arranged in a pleasing way. The room has windows across one wall that look out to a western exposure. In one corner is a library area with pillows and beanbags where students sit and read. There is a tape recorder with headsets on a small table in this area. The teacher’s desk sits in a corner banked by shelves and computers so that it is disguised. The desks are arranged in groups of four and placed so that when the teacher stands in the front of the room, all the students can sit and see her easily. An overhead projector is in the center of the desks with the screen pulled down in front of the brown chalkboard. The walls are covered with sentence strips with vocabulary words. The cabinets near the door are covered with student made strips of vocabulary and with sketches that explain the meaning of the words. The writing process and editing checklists are placed so students can use this as a resource. Each desk has a cursive

writing strip applied to top. There is a tub in the center of each grouping that has a dictionary, a thesaurus, and Xeroxed pages that have been slipped into page protectors.

Opening the interview by asking the teacher when she first became involved in teaching the gifted and talented student, she replied, "I began teaching one year ago. I received my training at the University of Houston Main Campus." She joined the school in January of 2003, and had two identified gifted students in her reading class. She commented, "I remember one student that had an attitude that was so difficult to deal with. The other student was good-natured for most of the period, but could also begin a verbal sparring if a situation did not please her. I remember last year as such a blur. I know that I provided that class with different lessons. I used more questioning with that group." She looked at her feet. Then she smiled and shook her head.

When I asked her how many hours of social and emotional development training she had received, she said that she received the thirty hours of gifted training that was provided through the district in the summer. She stated, "I did not receive any training in social and emotional development at the university, and I do not remember any instruction during my college courses that would help a classroom teacher with the gifted student."

Then I asked her to describe the topics covered during the social and emotional training. She said that of all the topics that she remembered and uses is bibliotherapy. This topic stood out to her as the most useful in her classroom. She said, "Since I teach literature I can pull out related topics and issues to help my students." She continued with the fact that many of the characters in the novels they study in this grade level have similarities in issues that some of her students experience. She smiled and said, "I think

Testing Miss Malarkey is a perfect example of testing anxiety and writing.” She talked about how the atmosphere of the classroom is also related to the social and emotional development of students. She added, “The classroom needs to be organized and not bare. The students need to work in groups so they can discuss and learn from one another. When children share their solutions and the thought processes they used to reach them, that is important. Every child grows up and proceeds through the stages of development, but the gifted child picks up more on his differences than the regular child.”

She then began to describe two students that she currently teaches. These students will be identified during the spring identification process. The parents of both children have decided not to move their child into the class with the other identified students. The parents feel that this move will not help but might perhaps, hinder their child’s routine and their sense of belonging to this homeroom. She glances at a desk that has papers falling on the floor, books without covers, and wads of paper tossed around the perimeter of the desk. “He cannot turn his brain off. He takes his pens apart throughout the day and states that his schoolwork is a menial task for him. I think he is solving world problems throughout the day and totally not focusing on the lessons that are being introduced.” Then she looks at another desk. The appearance of this desk is a complete opposite of the first desk described. The books are covered with “book sox” of various bright colors and patterns. The binder upon the desk has dividers with papers neatly placed in sections. The pencils are neatly placed in the tray at the top of the desk. The teacher then shares, “She worries about her family all day. I think there are financial issues, and the student shares how she talks with her mother about what the family should do. School is not of concern for her because she is giving advice to her mother about

divorce, and what the family should do.” She shared that these two children look at events with adult perspectives. They are not like normal children.”

Questioning her still further, I asked her to describe how the topics covered during the social and emotional training have been beneficial to her. She began by saying, “Social and emotional training is important to the school because it is mandatory that all children must be able to learn when they come to school. They cannot learn without that foundation, and if you have not fostered that trust issue with the students that you teach.” She shook her head and said that without the trust they will not learn. She continued with, “I wish that I had taken more college hours in educational psychology. I remember reading books, copying lecture notes, reading books that the professor had written and answering questions. I do not remember hands-on learning activities or examples of how to set up an environment that will excite the children.”

She referred to one of the child psychology courses that she found interesting. She continued with, “He told fascinating stories. How important it is to allow children to experience, but to make sure that they come away with a positive experience when learning.”

She reiterated that the social and emotional development training is necessary to the entire school because the school needs to provide a soothing and calm environment. She continued with, “This is their home away from home. One of the students who joined us this year told me at lunch that she loves our school because all the teachers are so perky.” She smiled and looked towards an area of her classroom, most likely where this child must spend her day learning in this classroom.

Probing further, I asked her to describe the topics covered during the training that she has found to be not beneficial, and she was not able to recall any specific activity that she has implemented in her classroom that was not beneficial. She was able to recall books that she has used in her classroom. She said, "I just remember throughout the week of training how noisy the participants were. I could tell that many were there who did not want to be. I was so frustrated because I wanted to learn, and they were not interested in new learning opportunities." She then commented on how the experience made her think that some of the students in the classroom may walk away each day with that same feeling. She shared that this is why the classroom environment is so important and management of the classroom is critical for an effective setting for children to learn.

When asking her how could the training be improved, she felt that watching a classroom and seeing actual student interaction while having the instructor point out what worked for each student would be helpful. "Each day I question myself on how can I help them? Every child is different, and you cannot treat them the same way." The use of a video presentation would enhance the training. This brought to mind the importance of training elements and the need for incorporating the different learning styles within the presentations.

When I asked her what else she could share about social and emotional training that had not been discussed, she explained that the changes she has made within her classroom. She worked to create a room that is comfortable and cozy for her students. She continued, "I changed the classroom structure after the training to better meet the needs of my students. I want a dynamic classroom that is not stagnate for the student to learn within." She then talked about the importance of the environment so that students

who display conflicting behaviors are separated, and that the entire classroom is not affected. The effective use of small group instruction and how this is set up so that the students in each group bring ideas and enhance the learning of all participants in the group. She smiled and said, “I find that praising the children is very beneficial, and modeling being pleasant is important to me.”

At this point in the interview the noise level rose in the hallway, and the students returned from their elective period. They lined up outside the door and waited quietly in the hallway. Their teacher rose from the table where we sat, smiled, and welcomed them back. They entered the classroom and returned to their desks where the activity that they had previously been involved with was awaited them. The students did not require instructions, but went back to work at their former literacy stations. The buzzing of students busy learning filled this cozy classroom. The teacher walked from group to group and began to ask questions while she checked over the work the students were completing.

SIX HOUR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT #4

The site for this interview was also at Silverlake Elementary. This classroom was bright and cheery with a theme of the jungle. The back wall had cages with hamsters and gerbils running in the wheels and chewing on bits of corn. The desks were arranged in groups of four, and the students had their books stacked on top with their backpacks in their chairs. The students were in physical education and had packed their bags before leaving. This third grade classroom had a variety of literature in baskets with the genre labeled on the front of each. The entire perimeter of the room had baskets of books. The classroom had one window where plants were hanging and thriving in the bright

environment. The teacher was sitting at a kidney-shaped table with a stack of spirals. She was reading the children's journal entries for the day.

After casual exchanges the interview began when she shared her background for teaching identified gifted and talented students. This is her third year to teach the class with the identified gifted students. She teams with another teacher who guides the students through their math and science instruction. She teaches the English Language Arts portion of the curriculum to her class and then switches with the teacher across the hall who teaches this gifted and talented group their science and math objectives. When this switch occurs midday, she instructs students who are in a regular ability-grouped class of students. She smiled when thinking about the differences between the two groups of students. "One group I worry about whether they will pass the state assessment, and the other I worry whether they will make the commended performance level goal." She explained that each year these two teachers who team together work hard to have each gifted and talented student set a goal to make academic recognition, or now, commendable performance, as the state has renamed this category. Last year all twenty-two students in the classroom made the prestigious rating. This is a perfect example of how when someone sets high expectations the students will reach for that same goal.

When I asked about the number of hours of social and emotional development she held, the teacher explained that she received the thirty hours of awareness through workshop training that the district provided. She took the training because she was returning to the teaching field that school year as a certified teacher. She had previously worked in the same school building as a paraprofessional. A smile beamed across her

face when she revealed that she had been a paraprofessional in previous school years. I asked her why she had made that choice instead of becoming a teacher. The teaching field is always on the look out for good teachers so I wondered why she had not jumped into that position when an opening was available? She shared that she had two previous years of experience in a district that she would not name. The principal in this school was not as supportive as she would have liked, and she developed a sense of not being able to meet the needs of students. She felt as if her offering as a teacher was not up to the standard that any school or child would benefit from. She resigned and stayed at home to begin her family. Her son enrolled in Silverlake as a first grader, and she began to volunteer. The opening for the paraprofessional tempted her, and she stepped into that position because she felt she would not be beneficial as a teacher. She said that for half-a-day she worked in the library and shared books, helped students with projects, and through that experience she realized how much she had to offer as a teacher. She found when working with students in the library that many times, it was with the bright students. She was intrigued by these students and asked for the opportunity to instruct them. She then sought out the required training. The training validated her thoughts as to what type of classroom and structure gifted and talented students need.

She then smiled and looked out across the classroom. She shared that her husband is extremely gifted and drives her crazy! I asked her about courses that she had while in college. She could not recall any courses that she had taken at the university level. She then named her professor at The University of Texas that she had for her student teaching experiences. We both were surprised to find out that we were both

instructed by Dr. Frank Guszak. We shared our student teaching experiences and discussed how these practices are needed in today's classrooms.

I questioned her about the topics covered during the social and emotional training she had received, and she recalled the topics that she found to be used most often with her students. She shared, "I have to spend more time helping them develop appropriate relationships when working in cooperative groupings. I also have trouble when they are outside during recess with the other classrooms. They tend to want to be in charge of everyone and everything." She then told about an incident that occurred the previous week about a child wanting to play in the baseball game but also wanting to organize the game of chase that some other students were playing. She smiled and said, "I had to do a lot of talking to help him see that he could play one or the other, but not both on this particular day." She shared that he became so frustrated because he had invented a way that the baseball game could become a chase type of game, but that none of the children wanted to hear his new idea. She stated, "He sat down on the bench next to me and questioned why the other students did not listen to him." She shook her head and said that the workshop taught her that the gifted child is different, and that it is okay even though it is hard for them to accept. They will survive. She shook her head and said that sometimes her students have a sense of giving up, and she is so glad she knows that listening and talking with them will help them in this difficult process of growing up.

When I asked her about topics that she uses in the classroom, she mentioned bibliotherapy. She talked about how bibliotherapy has made her look differently at the literature that she incorporates within her lessons. She shook her head and said, "Before I was so into what reading objective this book will teach, and now I can talk about so many

issues and find literature that will help the students.” She recalled how Dr. Frank Guszak brought so many titles into the sessions that he taught, and mentioned that she still uses many of these same titles with her students today. She smiled, “Good literature never ages!” She continued by explaining how she allows her students to choose literature when checking out library books, but that sometimes, depending on a student or a situation that someone is experiencing, she will encourage or recommend that a particular book be checked out.

When I asked her to describe how the topics covered during the training have proven beneficial, she again referred to bibliotherapy, and explained how this topic helped her with her love of reading. She said that she is probably attracted to this type of learner because of their voracious appetite for reading also. She said, “My classroom becomes a sanctuary when we study a book, discuss the integral components, describe the settings, and evaluate the characters and their actions. I am so amazed as to the insight and the reasoning skills that my students use when expressing themselves.”

Delving further into the area of topics covered, I asked which of these she felt have not been beneficial. After a pause, she looked toward the classroom with the groupings of student desks. She said that assigning mentors would not be something that she saw she could do in the classroom setting. She commented on the fact that the school has grades kindergarten through fourth so finding older students to mentor her students would be a difficult task to accomplish. She then added, “Finding teachers who exhibit the traits that perhaps could use some refinement might be a possibility.” She then hung her head and admitted that she could not justify the time that it would take to establish this type of program. She looked up and added, “I wish we had a person who was

designated to lead our group of gifted students on this campus so that these types of opportunities were available.”

When I asked her in what ways she thought social and emotional training could be improved, the question defeated her. She shared that so many new ideas had been presented during the training that her way of looking at her students had totally changed. She saw them as great minds, but when they behaved, it was like younger children, and the training had given her insight as to why this happens. She shared that she has also helped parents when they have asked questions and needed suggestions. She then laughed and commented that she did not take any parenting courses, but she finds that she certainly must give advice on this topic when meeting with parents. She also said that her parent clientele demands that she possess the knowledge about what her students must have for successful learning to take place in the classroom. She also stated that the parents demand that the curriculum content remain in a rigorous state causes constant turmoil when meeting the exceptional ability of the students.

When asking her to share something else about the social and emotional development training, she responded with, “This training is something that all teachers must have.” She referenced the fact that students need to be heard, to be questioned, and then to be guided in the direction that allows them to grow. Having this knowledge about techniques and reasons why students choose to display their discomfort is beneficial for the entire school building.

The classroom then began to fill with students, and she quickly jumped up from the table and welcomed them back into the room. The children wore red, sweaty faces, and beamed huge smiles as she greeted each by name as they entered the classroom. The

important element of forming relationships with students was alive and well in this classroom.

ADVANCED ACADEMIC SPECIALIST INTERVIEW

The Advanced Academic Specialist is in her second year with Pearland Independent School District (P.I.S.D.) This position was created in P.I.S.D. in the spring of 2000. The position was created based on the Board of Trustees desire to improve services for identified gifted and talented student, but most importantly, to increase the number of students in the Advanced Placement courses in the secondary schools. Another topic of great concern for the Board was the scores students were receiving on the college entry tests, the SAT. The Board of Trustees also wanted some work done to insure students identified as National Merit Scholars. This position had a wide range of responsibilities that ranged from kindergarten through twelfth grades. The specialist works under the Executive Director of Curriculum.

The interview was conducted during the spring semester of her second year. The department has grown and her office in the beginning was in a room with three other specialists. The district has since opened a new area and the curriculum department moved into this new space over the Winter Holidays. The Advanced Academic Specialist has been in this new setting for approximately six weeks. The new private office is small and consists of a desk and four bookcases. The cases are filled with books that are of a professional nature and also children's literature. The books are tightly placed on the shelves and the bottom shelves are filled tightly with binders with campus names written on each spine. There are two black file cabinets with two of the drawers opened to show files that are full and have the appearance of recently being adjusted.

The files have labels and represent each campus within the school district. There are no windows in this office. The artwork is neither visually stimulating nor hung in a manner for eye appeal. There were two chairs placed opposite her desk so when visiting there was a physical boundary between us.

After exchanging friendly dialogue and pleasantries, we began the conversation about the topic of which she was aware. She begins to speak about her preconceived biases about social and emotional issues as observed with teachers of our gifted children. She states, “It has been my position as a teacher working with colleagues and in my position currently, to notice that the teachers who seem to be most concerned about children with gifted issues are the teachers who either have gifted children themselves or have a sibling or spouse who is gifted and really have that understanding. I have seen some teachers on both ends. Some have the gifted and talented endorsement that I really do not think fit into teaching this type of learner. I think that social and emotional development was one of the courses they took, and when it was over, they forgot about it.”

I questioned the academic specialist as to what format of social and emotional training she has received, and I learned the respondent received a three-hour graduate course at Southern Methodist University as well as the six-hour workshop that was conducted in the district. Topics she had from the university were the same as those presented in the training presented at the local level. She then clarified that assessment was stressed heavily at the university training that she had received throughout all the courses that she took.

When questioned about what importance the district placed upon social and emotional training, she stated, “I see less concern here that I did in my previous district. The district I came from, I do not think, put enough emphasis on it; actually, I cannot say that. The campus I came from, because I did have a district perspective in my previous district, but my principal had a gifted child, and I think that may have made a difference on the campus where I taught. The principal assigned a counselor to the gifted and talented labeled students. This was not the counselor’s only responsibility. The principal made sure that the counselor went to the Texas Association of Gifted and Talented Conference each year. The counselor only had the six hours that are required for administrators.” She paused and then said, “I am sure she had thirty hours of awareness prior to moving into her counseling position so she did have more than the six administrative training hours.” She explained about the team of junior high gifted and talented teachers and how the counselor would meet with the team on a regular basis. “She really worked with us, and I do not think you really see that many districts really putting an emphasis on this type of service.”

When questioned about the district’s role in providing social and emotional training for the gifted and talented, she explained, “The district offers six hours of social and emotional development on Saturdays. It has been offered twice a year.” She then looked at her calendar and stated, “I think we will just offer this workshop once though. I do not think there are that many teachers who need the hours.” She stated that many of the teachers who needed the training or the thirty hours of awareness completed those required hours during the fall semester. “There are just a few who have not, and they can attend training offered at Region IV.” She again referenced her calendar that was placed

on the top of her desk. She turned the pages to the month of July and pointed to a week and announced, “We have blocked off a week, the last week in July, when we will provide this training for teachers who still have not met the requirement or for new hires to the district.”

I asked her that as the specialist for this district how she thought this topic, social and emotional development, impacts a typical day for her in her role as specialist. She stopped and looked across the office to the back wall behind me. She smiled and said, “It is something that I really try to convey to the teachers when I meet with them, and I feel like I have to do it a lot more in the secondary level than in the elementary schools. I think it is the nature of the secondary teacher as compared to the nature of the elementary teacher to meet the cognitive needs and ignore the affective domain. It’s been my experience that elementary teachers, in general, tend to be more aware of their student’s emotional well being and the differences in their students whether they are gifted or not.” She then commented that this position has allowed her to see all levels and to begin to understand. She smiled and said, “Of course, you know the old saying that elementary teachers ‘teach children’ while secondary teachers ‘teach content’, and I say that as a former secondary teacher.” We both laughed and agreed with this statement.

She then talked about identification and how important it is to have someone on each campus to be the representative or advocate for the gifted learner. She referenced that some campuses have a counselor who meets with the district committee to identify students. She also will meet with teachers who have identified students, or in some cases, not identified students, who the teachers feel have great potential and are not rising to the challenge. At the meetings or conferences, the problem or issue that surfaces through

discussion with the teacher, many times is one of a social and emotional development topic. Many parents talk with her about their children, but the conversations that most stand out in her mind are of an academic nature. In speaking about the parent conferences she said, “They are mainly concerned about lack of academic challenge.” She then paused and looked behind me at the wall and continued with, “I do have two parents who talk with me on a fairly regular basis about social and emotional issues. Both of the students have been advanced in their grade assignments. One is a fourth grader who is chronologically a second grader so he has some social and emotional issues.”

I continued our conversation by asking her to consider her expertise in the area, and to determine what she considers necessary topics for social and emotional training. She paused and then said, “I think teachers really need to understand the intensity of the gifted child whether it is through the work of Dabrowski or Delisle. My personal opinion is that is the key to understanding what is going on. That is where teachers can find the relationship between the social emotional element and the private development. I do not think it is necessary that we overload them and make them learn to spell Dabrowski and recite all seven overexcitabilities, but they need to understand the big idea. I think that if we can get them to understand that concept then I think they would be receptive and could do more with their students.” This was the first respondent to mention the work of Dabrowski.

Next, I asked the specialist what type of teacher best fits the model of a teacher of the gifted. The respondent paused for a while as if to picture a particular teacher in her mind. She glanced down at her desk and then looked again at the back wall of her office.

She began with, “He or she needs to have a good sense of humor. He needs enough self-confidence to not mind being challenged when a student has more knowledge in a particular area than he does. The teacher must be comfortable enough with himself so that he can take the role of the learner and go off in a direction that may fall outside his level of expertise. He needs expertise in helping a student learn how to find information on a topic. From my personal point of view, teachers who have had some personal experience with a gifted individual tend to do better at it whether it is their own child, their spouse, a sibling, or maybe a close relationship with a student who is gifted. Somehow, a teacher seems to be much better when a gifted individual has touched their lives.”

When I asked about her involvement in the hiring of teachers for the gifted and talented classrooms, her answer came quickly and easily. She smiled and answered very directly, “Not at all.” She smiled and shook her head. I then asked her why this was so. She explained that the campuses are site based and the principal has the duty of hiring and then assigning the role that each teacher will have at the particular campus. I asked her if she had been involved in the interview process on any campus. She once again quickly said, “No.”

Probing further, I asked her what she thought should be required for training that is ongoing for teachers of the gifted. She answered by saying, “Ideally, I think that there would be an update in that area each year, but not the same workshop.” I asked her to go into more detail about what topics should be visited each year. She continued with an explanation that the topics covered could go into more depth. She felt strongly that individual study or an extended study could be beneficial for teachers, something more

than a six hour workshop. Having a teacher study a topic in detail for an hour here and there would create time for the teacher to have reflection and then perhaps more of the strategies learned would be implemented within the classroom. She continued with, “Of course, I am a former English teacher and value journaling, things like that; journaling, reflection, and application are things we did in the social and emotional course that I took. We were all teaching at the time, and we were required to go apply the topics and strategies that were introduced in class each week. The professor would encourage us to use this before we meet the next week. I think this made the information more meaningful.”

The conversation continued about how her principal at her former teaching assignment supported the team by implementing a gifted advisory period. The counselor that she had referred to earlier in the conversation would meet with the gifted students as a group. The faculty felt that the advisory period should be a time when the gifted were with their age peers and not with only gifted students. The principal wanted this advisory period to be a time for in-depth counseling. The students had only been in self-contained classrooms throughout elementary, and the principal felt that this time was structured to help meet the needs of the gifted students. He thought the teachers and counselor should have the time to sit and talk and listen to the students. The advisory period allowed the time and flexibility to form a relationship with the students. She smiled and said, “We, the teachers, needed to sit and talk to and with our students.”

She then talked about another program that began when she was taking the course on social and emotional development. She said, “It began with a strange lunch schedule and it just accidentally happened. The grade levels had different lunch schedules, but the

gifted teachers taught all the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders that were labeled gifted and talented. This group of teachers was also involved in the creation of the bell schedule. It happened that the seventh graders had algebra during a lunch period. They were supposed to go to lunch first, but the teacher was still teaching sixth graders so they were unable to leave their backpacks in that room. Since my room was empty at that time, they began to eat lunch with me in my classroom every day. It was the neatest experience.” I thought about how important that type of relationship is and how often teachers will not use their planning or lunch times to allow this type of interaction.

I continued the conversation by asking her to evaluate the social and emotional training that is offered to the teachers within the district. She replied, “I think that what we do is good, but it is inadequate. It isn’t enough, and there is not follow through. Six hours seat time on Saturday is not sufficient. Some teachers get so excited and want to follow up with more ideas while others just leave and never think about the ideas again.” She smirked and said, “Give me my certificate and get me out of here.”

She talked about the problem of expecting teachers to attend workshops that must have an attendance of five Saturdays in the first semester. She shared the frustration that the teachers express because many are new to the district or to teaching and are assigned to teach students who are gifted and talented. The state plan dictates the requirements that these teachers must have the thirty hours of awareness by the end of the first semester. The amount of time and the amount of information is a problem. She continued with, “I wish principals would assign teachers who have been in the district and already have the requirements to be assigned to those classrooms.”

She felt that all teachers need to obtain the required thirty hours of awareness, but not to do so in an emergency situation. She added that, “I find that most teachers fall back on the emergency clause.” This hasty training does not usually benefit the teachers because she said the training, “Does not stick. For example, if you have a brand new, first year right out of college teacher or one who is going through an alternative certification program, completing thirty hours in the first semester is just too much.” This superficial exposure does not provide a long lasting benefit for the students who they teach now or will teach in the future. She then shared that a principal who is new to a campus this year is requiring that all staff receive thirty hours of gifted and talented awareness. This expectation has not existed on this campus in the past so very few teachers have the training. A two-year window has been allowed so that the staff can take courses or workshops at their leisure, hopefully providing a long term pay off for all the students at this elementary school.

I asked her to what extent the requirements for social and emotional training was required for those teaching the gifted and talented with this district. She answered, “They are not required because the state does not require social and emotional development to be included, so this district does not.” She then shared that she must accept other training as to not defy what the state has put into place. She said, “Teachers must submit a course syllabus or the workshop handout if they request gifted credit for a course or a workshop.” She looks to see if the course or workshop meets the criterion for a gifted course as well as how the individual teacher will use that specific material for classroom instruction of the gifted student. “I make that decision as to whether or not that specific class qualifies for gifted credit with this district.”

I asked her if there were any other comments about her role as advanced academic specialist in relation to social and emotional development that she would care to share. She smiled and looked at her desk and said, “It is an area of frustration for me.” She continued by sharing that she presented an idea to two schools last year. One school turned down the idea immediately upon hearing the proposal. The second showed an interest, but never followed through with the plan. She shook her head and said that there seems to be much talk, but when it comes to formulating a plan she feels that the commitment to the gifted student is not of high priority.

Our conversation ended with the specialist looking as if her program had been a failure. The job of change for the gifted program must be difficult when the course of change is determined by those outside of the expertise of the needed accommodations for the gifted students.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The current Executive Director is in her third year of overseeing the huge task of helping this growing district keep up with state mandates, and a looming District Effectiveness Compliance visit in the fall semester. She has moved from the Education Support Center to an area known as the Education Support Center Annex. This area had to be reconfigured to house the ten specialists that she oversees. The area has provided those specialists with private offices and also has given the department two large conference centers to host the many workshops and training programs that they offer to the district. Her office is large with a window to allow sunshine to filter through and create a quiet glow in the room. Her desk is arranged so that when she speaks on the phone her view is of the landscaped lawn outside the building. I hear a bell ring and

suddenly, students exit through a door and walk on a sidewalk that is parallel to her office window. She smiles and speaks of how she loves being able to see the students meander by throughout the day. She smiles and says, “They are why I am here each day and why I am committed to making sure I give the teachers the resources they require.”

On the wall to the left upon entering the office are bookcases. The height is from the ceiling to the floor. They are filled with professional books as well as with binders with the contents written on the spine. Snuggled next to the bookcases is a round table with four chairs. This is where we are seated to discuss the topic.

The Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction began her experience in this district as a paraprofessional working at an elementary school in the district thirty years ago. She went back to school and received a teaching degree and taught at the junior high level. She loves literature, and her passion is writing. She has been an elementary principal and had the opportunity to open a new elementary school. She completed her doctorate while in her first year as the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Pearland Independent School District. She is also a professor with the University of Houston and instructs graduate students in the area of writing instruction.

Upon questioning the director about the format of social and emotional training she had received, I learned that she has only received social and emotional training through a workshop through the district. She has received gifted training at the university level. She said that the training was mainly in the area of assessment and programming options.

I inquired about what level of importance the district placed upon social and emotional development training. She explained that the district does not highlight this

topic in any particular way. She said, “This is probably something that we should take a look at now that you have posed this question this way, but it is part of the thirty hours of training for the awareness hours.” She talked about one junior high campus that is highlighting this topic. The campus has piloted some activities with their counselor in the social and emotional area. She shared that it is difficult to make this connection with every campus. She added, “Having other people feel that this topic is important is very difficult.”

I continued by asking her to describe the district’s role in providing social and emotional training for the gifted. She explained that a contract system has been used to train teachers with strategies to use for social and emotional development for gifted students. She said, “We’ve used people in the district, contracted out-of-district presenters, independent consultants, and people who work for other districts, and that’s pretty much it.”

Then I asked her to explain how the topic of social and emotional development impacts a typical day for her in her role as executive director of curriculum and instruction for this district. She replied, “In my interaction with parents because parents are always concerned about how their children are viewed as gifted children who may have different needs from those of the other students in the classes. They are aware of it, but they are not sure schools are aware of it, and they are not sure how we are addressing that issue, which in many instances, I know that we are not.” She then looked at her bookcase, and referred to the book, *Survival Guide for the Gifted Students*, which is also the guide for parents of the gifted. She then talked about her experience as a principal

and explained how she would spend a large amount of time reassuring parents that the school is aware of their child's needs and will do what is best for each child.

Encouraging her to continue, I asked her to describe the topics that she thought would be necessary for social and emotional training. She stated, "Self-esteem, how to cope with being a bright kid in a world where everyone is not bright. How to set goals for kids who are really overly gifted kids who perhaps may have goals beyond where they are today because kids are like flowers that open and blossom." She then smiled and seemed to recall a particular student and said, "They really do not know their potential unless you point that out and show them the vast array of things that they can become and what they can do." She talked about how a student feels about himself will then determine what will become of that particular student. She said, "It is not always the talent that is the determining factor, but what you think about yourself."

When I asked her what type of teacher she thinks best fits the model of a teacher for the gifted, she asked if I wanted a name of a particular teacher or just characteristics. Then she began by saying, "Someone that sets the bar very high, but she is always there to facilitate their being able to meet the goal that has been set. She models, encourages, cajoles, interacts well with parents and lets them know what her expectations are. This type of teacher will help the parents to understand the child and to realize how the curriculum is a stepping-stone path and that understanding will show a connection that will apply to any level. This type of teacher will not only be a teacher of the children, but also of the families. She will work with families, not just the kids, and as a GT teacher, she wants to spread that throughout the school. This teacher helps all to see that what is happening in the gifted classroom needs to happen in all classrooms. This is what is best

for all students. It is not just about an identified group of kids; it is about developing talent, and she really understands that.”

Next, I asked her how involved she was in the hiring of teachers for the gifted and talented program. She explained how the district operates with site based decision-making; therefore, the campus principal has the responsibility to choose the instructors at their campus. Some of the campuses have committees that choose professional staff members. She then said that she is not involved with the hiring of personnel and that her job is to support the campus by offering the required training.

At this point, I asked her to describe the social and emotional training that is offered through the district for teachers of the gifted and talented. She responded by explaining that a variety of offerings help teachers accumulate the required hours. The hours are derived from the state plan. The offerings include summer training, and training through district staff development days. There are currently three scheduled each year for the staff to attend. The course offerings are published, the staff applies to attend, and then attends these sessions for all three of the district staff development days. Saturday training is also an option. She explained how the district is having to rely more and more on this type of training due to budget constraints and the growing concern about teachers being pulled out of the classroom while the students have substitute teachers. She added that, “Region IV offers sessions, so that is also an option.”

She then paused and looked towards her desk and said, “This office provides funding for training through the Southeast Gifted Cooperative and also the Houston Gifted Cooperative. We belong to two Cooperative groups. For a minimal fee we can

send up to twenty-five teachers. We have few people who take advantage of it because everybody is so overwhelmed and overworked.”

Asking her to evaluate the social and emotional training that is offered to the teachers within the district, she responded by saying, “You know we really have not evaluated. I never really thought about that before. There is no follow through to see if they do anything differently in the classroom.” She reached for her pen and wrote a note on the pad of paper that was next to her. She smiled and remarked that she always seems to be adding tasks to her already overflowing list of items to complete.

When I asked her to what extent the requirements for social and emotional are required for teachers of the gifted and talented, she paused and thought about the question for a time. She asked if social and emotional was a required component according to the state plan, and then said that Nature and Needs is the area that must be completed. She added that teachers could skip that area if they chose to do so. She said that many probably have since assessment, curriculum and identification are required.

I asked her if she could add any other comments about her position as executive director in relation to social and emotional development, and she commented that it is an important topic for the gifted as well as for the at-risk student. She stated, “That is one of the first things you do when assessing a student as to the reason why he or she is not grasping the concepts being introduced.” She then added that every teacher needs to have the training because we must start with that type of assessment when helping a child learn. She smiled and said, “An unhappy child, a child who doesn’t like himself or herself is not going to be successful in the classroom or anywhere so what are you to do in order to get to the business of teaching?”

She then talked about the character-education program that the district integrated a few years ago. She added that the district would also begin an intensive training with poverty training to help our students who are low socio-economic and are not making the necessary advances in their learning. She stated, “The training will help teachers so that they gain a better understanding about kids who come from different backgrounds and about the issues that are created and come into the classroom. These issues have to be dealt with.”

She smiled and began to tell a story about a teacher who she once worked with. “I’ll never forget working with this teacher who said, ‘I thought it is more than about just content and filling up a barrel.’ It does not work that way; you have to connect with the students.” She smiled and talked about how you must love the students and form rapport with them. It is that all so important connection. She continued, “That is social emotional development in capital letters. We all have to feel like we are cared for, whether we are five years old or older, much older. Social and emotional is the heart of everything.”

CAMPUS PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

C.J. Harris Elementary provided the site for the campus principal interview. This campus was also the site for a gifted endorsement interview. The office staff was friendly and immediately called the principal to alert her. She stepped out of her office and smiled as she guided me inside. The room was bright and cheery. The desk sat nestled into a corner so that she did not have a barrier between herself and others when in the office. A round table with four chairs sat just inside the entrance. The shelves around her office contained books and pictures of her family. The door remained open, and was

covered with children's hand-drawn pictures that were filled with love messages for their principal. The age of the students who produced the drawing was evident by the types of facial features and the size of the letters used for the notes. We sat down and chatted about the day, and then began the interview.

Initially, I asked her what type of teacher best fits the model of a teacher of the gifted. When explaining the type of teacher she considers best for the gifted and talented classroom, she kept looking up and out of the office area. It seemed as if she was looking towards the area of the school where the teacher is actually located. She explained how difficult it is each year to make sure that the identified are in the correct classroom and that not all the space is filled before registration begins in August. She said that currently there are thirty-four children identified as gifted and talented in their entire school. She said, "It seems that each grade is different; there may be more one year that are identified in first grade, and then very few the next year." The groups with the most identified were currently in fourth grade. She had nine identified students in fourth grade. I asked if they were in the same class. She said that she had left them together, but that was the last group to do that. She had begun in the first grade the previous year with clustering the identified gifted and talented in groups of three or four so that there was not one class that was known as the gifted class. She said, "This had become a problem because every family wanted their child in that particular class. I also felt that the instruction that was occurring in that class would be beneficial for all students in that grade level."

The campus enjoyed a teaching staff with years of experience. Many of the teachers who were on this campus were very respected throughout the district and the area. Several have won teacher-of-the-year awards both locally and in the Region IV

area. She continued, “This is my third year as principal of this campus and changing this type of classroom assignment has really stirred up the community.” She then looked down and shook her head and said, “I did not think it was fair for a group of children who have the parent advocacy and assertiveness to always know which class their child would be in each school year.” The same teachers are assigned to teach that particular class year after year. I remembered the interview with the gifted endorsement teacher stating that she knew the teacher of the second grade class would retire, and so she quickly pursued her endorsement.

The discussion continued with the characteristics important for the teacher of the gifted as to being able to meet the needs of this diverse group, and also to keep parents happy. The principal shared that this group of students has the most active parents on the campus. They are the largest group to attend family nights, they come to award ceremonies, and they are here to question if the report card is not filled with grades of A’s. The teacher of this type of class must be able to continue to provide relevant and rigorous work regardless of the amount of pressure that the parents place upon the teacher as well as upon their own children. The teacher of the class must be comfortable communicating and helping the parent understand why the assignment was graded in the manner it was. They need to be comfortable with their own intelligence. They need to have the knowledge and the desire to create their own plan each year based upon the level of the students. Since the class has a handful of identified gifted and talented students, the rest of the class makeup is of high achieving students. She continued, “I must have a teacher who realizes that the high achieving student is the easiest type of student to teach.

Our gifted students are the ones who make us think, to change our practices, and to develop new plans, and most importantly, to use lots of flexibility.”

I asked her what importance she places upon the types of training the teachers in her building receive. She answered by explaining that the training aspect of the teachers who teach the class varies throughout the building. She added, “I have one teacher who actually has a gifted endorsement.” The rest are able to teach this class because they have completed the required thirty hours of awareness. She then commented that since this was only her third year, she has not yet focused on the gifted training for the remainder of the campus. She said, “It would be nice if all teachers had the training so that I could change the teacher each year, and then the community would not know who to expect as the assigned teacher each year.” She then laughed and said, “But I also know that some teachers have no business teaching that type of class. There are some teachers who are meant to teach groups of children who require modifications, and they would not feel comfortable with the gifted learner.”

When I asked her to describe her role in providing training of the gifted for the teachers on her campus, she explained that the training that occurs on her campus is basically TAKS oriented. The campus staff-development-options that have occurred are geared to meet a wide range of subject areas. She said, “I have led my campus through a year long training using the Ruby Payne framework for poverty. This yearlong look into the resources that some students lack has been our focus. The subpopulation of low socioeconomic students has proven to be a wide gap and this must change. The training that occurs each year has been based on the target areas that occur each year when our students take the state assessment. Our campus had low writing scores so that is the area

of focus for the upcoming school year. I place the students who are identified in the classroom with a teacher that I know has the required training. I do not provide training for these teachers on my campus. I share the training opportunities that the Advanced Academic Specialist coordinates each semester.

She stated that she leaves the six-hour update and the documentation that must be presented to the principal for the summative conferences that are held each spring semester with the teachers. She stated, “I receive a list of the teachers who are eligible to teach that particular class in the spring each year from the Curriculum and Instruction Department. I have found that the teachers who are assigned to teach this class keep up with the requirements and submit the required documentation each year”.

She continued with, “I am sad to say, but I mainly focus on the areas of which I am held accountable according to state assessment testing. I do know how important relationships are as a teacher in the classroom. This concept is also brought about from the training through Ruby Payne’s framework. There is a quote from Dr. Comer, I believe, about how no significant learning will take place without a relationship.”

Probing further, I asked her to what extent are the requirements for social and emotional training required for those teaching the gifted and talented on her campus. She talked about some of the conflicts that she must address that could have been extinguished without her help if the teacher had used some thought about where the child was emotionally and not centered all issues on purely the academic area. She looked toward her desk and commented that a child had come to school a few weeks ago and refused to do any work. The teacher had sent the child to the office after an hour of refusing to complete any assignments. She said, “After talking with him about his day, I

found out that his mother was out of town caring for her ailing parent. I then helped him process that his mother would be sad to know that he wasn't doing his job here at school while she was out of town. He talked some more about his fears about losing this grandparent. After this chat he returned to class and had a good day at school. I guess this is what you mean by social and emotional development? I spend much of my time listening and helping the children figure out the best plan to be successful at school each day.”

When I asked her to describe the training that she had received for the gifted and talented, I discovered that the training that she has completed is merely the basic six hours of administrator training. She said, “I took this training in Clear Creek Independent School District the first year I was an assistant principal.” She then looked down at the table and shook her head and continued, “I cannot remember much of the training. I do remember the piece about the identification process. As a teacher I always had referred any questions to the teacher who came to our campus on a weekly basis and provided gifted and talented instruction for those identified. I knew that parents and teachers would now expect me to know the process for students obtaining that label.”

Pushing further, I asked her to describe the training required for teachers of the gifted to accumulate, and to explain if and how that is important to her as the campus principal. The training that the teachers take as part of the thirty hours of awareness requirement was an area that she was not familiar with. She said, “I know that the training takes place during a week in July, usually the last week. I could not tell you the topics that each day covers. I know that curriculum is one of the training components, and this is an area that our campus needs to look at next year. I fear that some of the

concepts that need to be introduced each year are not being covered. The teachers sometimes feel that since the class is so bright they do not have to follow the Texas Essential Knowledge Skills. They can continue with the projects and research programs.”

I posed a question about the literature that the students read in these advanced classes. She began with, “I know that the reading level is higher for most of these students so the teacher pulls in literature that is above that grade level. I asked her if she was concerned with topics that might be introduced in that higher level reading materials. She laughed and said that the teachers are careful because of the parent involvement. She said, “Our parents would not allow any novel with questionable material be read by their student.”

I was surprised when I asked her to evaluate the social and emotional training that is offered to the teachers within the district because she felt she could not comment. She said, “I have not participated in the training that is offered here in Pearland Independent School District, and really have no idea about the components of the training. I also do not regulate the areas of training teachers when they pursue their six hour updates.” Then she stopped and commented once again on the Ruby Payne Training. She shared that relationships are important, but that also having a strong knowledge of the content makes for a successful classroom.

Upon completing this interview, I asked if she could share other comments she might have about her job as campus principal in relation to gifted and talented social and emotional development. She shared that she really did not have an in-depth knowledge of gifted and talented services for students. She said that as principal she is pulled into so

many directions that it is difficult to concentrate on all the areas that her students represent. She said that is one reason it is important to have teachers in these classrooms who are informed about the topic. She added, “They can then communicate with parents.” She laughed and said that she does count on the Advanced Academic Specialist on a regular basis. She stated, “I find that after a referral period when the letters go out stating whether or not their child met the criteria, I need her explanations and the jargon she uses to help the parents understand what the identification process is looking for in the students.

We then closed the interview and walked out of the office. The dismissal bell had rung and the students were in lines on the front porch. The students were so happy that they were going home and the chatter of the children was refreshing. It reminded me of the importance of providing excellent training so that our children will have a positive experience each day in the school building.

CLOSING

The respondents mentioned strategies that are used in social and emotional development training. These include bibliotherapy, support groups and mentoring. These strategies have been incorporated into some classrooms. As mentioned by respondents, time seems to be the major deterrent for teachers when including the topics from within the affective domain within the curriculum.

Bibliotherapy was introduced in the early 1990’s to enable gifted and talented students who read vicariously to solve some of the situations that they may experience personally through a character in a book. Hoagland(1972) defines as “The attempt of an individual to promote his mental and emotional health by using reading materials to

fulfill needs, relieve pressures or help his development as a person” (p. 390). This use of using literature for children to identify and then to formulate different approaches to problems or needs has not been widely researched since the gifted are felt to not have problems (Davis & Rimm, 1994). As discussed, many gifted students are not ones to take risks, and using bibliotherapy to help a student read about a situation and then apply their reading to their own lives is beneficial.

Sources that help teachers or counselors find literature are itemized in a thematic organization. Dreyer (1985) created *The Bookfinder* to easily find topics within a book that would be beneficial for a student. This source explains the way to set up bibliotherapy. There are methods for allowing an entire classroom to study a topic within a particular book. Having an individual read about a character that has a similar problem is another option. Establishing a small group situation is another viable way to help meet the needs of the gifted learner.

Support Groups help students that need to be with peers that are experiencing the same difficulties or may need time to discuss and share their ideas and feelings with others that may be experiencing similar thoughts and ideas. Davis & Rimm (1994) find that “as a general rule, the greater the gift, the greater the counseling need (393). Topics introduced for discussion within a support group setting can be determined by the facilitator of the group. The age of participants can also determine if topics can be brought about by the students. The support group is to help students strive to become self-actualized (Davis & Rimm, 1994).

Sessions can be grouped in a variety of ways, small group, age peer groupings, or topic related groupings. The students can also be grouped in a multiage setting. The best

facilitator is a person that is not the evaluator for the students. This relationship will best allow the participants to freely express their ideas (Davis & Rimm, 1994).

Mentoring is an area that was mentioned in the interviews. This option was again felt to be not manageable due to the age groupings on the campuses and also prohibitive transportation costs. Betts (1986) describes this as providing opportunities for adults to nurture, facilitate, and become a role model for the gifted student. Betts finds that, “People need to interact with, support, and communicate with the gifted, both formally and informally (p. 589). When looking at the profiles of the gifted learner that Betts (1988) identified, the underground is one that is best served with the support of gifted peers. The role of mentoring is most linked with helping someone with individual career aspirations. The multipotentiality of gifted students can lead to mixed feelings of thoughts in the pursuit of career attainment. Kerr (1983) establishes that a mentor can address the effects of career awareness, most notably in the case of women. This valuable experience is felt to be beneficial when the program is structured to provide encouragement, new ways of thinking and seeing the strengths of the talents (Berger, 1989).

The interviews opened new thoughts about how training is crucial to initiating activities and to following through in providing the services for the gifted individuals within our charge. The responses from different training opportunities also showed how affective education is valued in some course offerings and rarely mentioned by others. This study allowed the collection of training elements that would best serve our gifted individuals in the classrooms.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In reflecting on this study there are five key elements that must be addressed if teacher training in the area of social and emotional development of gifted and talented students is to have impact. The research questions used to guide this study will provide a vehicle for summarizing the findings of this study.

1). What specific training opportunities have educators of the gifted taken?

The classroom teachers interviewed were able to respond to this question with a simple calculation of when they first had identified gifted and talented students in their classroom. When a teacher has identified gifted students in the classroom the required hours denoting gifted training must be a part of the teacher's credentials. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction as well as the principal interviewed made references to their experiences with students in the classroom. They had the required hours of gifted training but the majority of their responses mainly involved mandates from the state of Texas to provide programming options for the identified gifted and talented in the district and on each school campus. They also spoke of the requirements to ensure the teachers in the classroom are qualified to teach an identified gifted student.

Teachers who were new to education were placed into these positions servicing the identified gifted and talented based on the fact that they were filling in a space due to a vacancy. In this scenario the teacher then had to take the required training. This has to be accomplished before the end of the first academic semester. The teachers with years of experience shared that they knew of impending vacancies and planned on how to get the required training so they could assume that position.

Throughout the interviews with the classroom teachers, only one was able to describe meaningfully why she loves teaching the gifted student. One respondent was able to verbally explain her knowledge about the characteristics of the gifted students. The other respondents did not offer insights or explanations as to why they prefer to teach these learners.

The administrators interviewed had experience at instructing students who were labeled gifted and talented. The executive director did not have any university training in social and emotional development, but had taken courses dealing with gifted instruction in the university setting. The principal had only acquired the six hours that are necessary for all administrators and counselors who are in charge of programming options for the students. As a teacher she had identified students in her classroom, but she was not the teacher of record because of the programming options that the Clear Creek Independent School District uses. The training that administrators are required to take does not contain social and emotional components as topics. The advanced academic specialist entered the classroom setting having a gifted and talented endorsement. She held a three-hour university course on social and emotional development from Southern Methodist University. Two of the eight teachers interviewed had strategically planned to secure the class with identified gifted and talented students by obtaining a gifted and talented endorsement at the university setting. The other two respondents with gifted and talented endorsements pursued the required training, but their motive for continuing in higher learning was because of the administration's expectation that all teachers in this setting would have an endorsement rather than the minimum of thirty hours of workshop training. The four teachers who received the workshop training were required to receive

the training because they had identified students in their classroom. In Pearland Independent School District the identified students receive gifted programming from their assigned homeroom teacher. This group of four teachers receiving the workshop hours did not communicate reluctance or regret that this training had been pursued.

Training components that specifically applied to the development of social and emotional techniques required the respondents to stop and calculate. Of the eight respondents only one with the university training could easily comment on the amount of hours accrued. This respondent received her training during the summer ICE courses that are offered at Texas A&M University. The other three respondents with training at other university settings could not remember if they had taken a course that specifically dealt with the topics that are embedded within social and emotional development.

The respondents with the social and emotional development workshop hours easily calculated the question. Those that had taken the Saturday workshops remembered the course and could recall the activities as well as the format of the training. They were able to easily recall whether they had taken the course in the fall semester or during a week of summer training. One respondent who took the course in the summer training had to clarify the types of topics and simply could not remember. This respondent referred to the noise that the other participants were making throughout the week of training and discussed how that distracted her from the training that was presented each day.

The teachers who had received university training commented that they had taken workshop hours in order to satisfy the six-hour annual update requirement, but they did not know if they had taken social and emotional development as a course. The teachers

taking the one-week course were able to recall if one session was dedicated to the development of social and emotional needs of students. The differences of when the respondents participated in the training could account for the lack of remembering the specifics of the actual course study.

The respondents who received their training at the university setting varied depending upon which university provided the training. The respondents from one university could not remember a course specifically dedicated to this topic. The other two recalled the course, and both took the course at the summer session of the ICE experience. A note needs to follow that this researcher was the presenter for the summer ICE course and having that connection with the respondent could have, in fact, helped them to recall the training options. The advanced academic specialist also recalled a specific course that she took as part of her endorsement program that dealt with the topics belonging to social and emotional development.

- 2). What components of this training have been utilized in the classroom and are regarded as necessary in the development of social and emotional issues?

The topics that were presented in the training for social and emotional development vary according to the location where the respondent trained. The respondents who participated in Saturday workshops or the summer ICE courses could recall various activities as well as specific books that were covered. Respondents referred most often to the work of Jim Delisle.

Commonalties of thinking that resulted from both types of training include:

“Uniqueness of gifted and talented students.”

“The labels of being an outcast.”

“Increased sensitivity”

“Trouble with interacting with others.”

“Trouble with associating with others as compared with others in the class.”

“Bibliotherapy – using literature for students to read and relate their issues”

“Setting up the classroom so group work is valued.”

“Dabrowski’s Overexcitabilities – how some students are diagnosed as having ADHD

“I read *Growing Good Kids* (Delisle, 1996) and have implanted some activities from that book.”

“You cannot teach their head until you teach their heart.”

“*Using Gifted Kids Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook* (Delisle & Espeland, 1996) to help students and their parents with issues such as perfectionism, self esteem, and their behavior.”

When posing this question to the respondents who received training from other sources, one respondent referred to the importance of classroom management and how she felt that the training for teachers needs to be a full semester on this one topic. She recounted the course and spoke highly of the projects and the work that she was able to bring back into the classroom. This response was insightful in that the information that she took was that of focusing on the cognitive domain for the children participating in the gifted and talented programs.

The teachers who received the workshop training with the district or have attended the summer course at Texas A&M shared that the course has opened their eyes to the importance of forming and then maintaining relationships with their students. These teachers also brought in acquired connections based on the district staff development focus on the importance of relationship building based upon the required readings Ruby Payne's (2001) *Framework for Understanding Poverty*. The district's focus for this academic school year brings to mind the quote from Dr. Comer, "There is no significant learning until a relationship is formed," emphasizes the magnitude of the importance of the unique relationship needed between teacher and student.

This question spurred dialogue that showed that the training is important for those who were exposed to the components of social and emotional development. One gifted and talented endorsed respondent shared her dilemma with teachers in the pre-advanced placement courses wanting to exit gifted students who did not fit the mold of a typical high achieving student. This teacher found herself explaining that certain characteristics are typical of a gifted learner. She said that if all teachers were required to have this training they would be able to provide flexibility in the classroom so that the gifted students would have their needs met. One teacher with an endorsement referred back to classroom management courses and how necessary they are in the teacher's training in college. The statement that she made was very general and referred to all students; she implied that classroom management was the key to a successful classroom. A workshop respondent made the comment that all adults in the building who teach children need the training because the children are seeking out those adults to talk with and to share their ideas with. "Adults who know gifted and talented can give them an idea of the future."

Another respondent from the workshop-training category felt that the training is necessary because some students are not labeled gifted but may exhibit the characteristics that can be found in a gifted learner. If all personnel have the knowledge of the specific needs of the gifted, then all students, regardless of whether they wear the label of gifted, can receive the guidance they need in a learning situation.

A workshop respondent observed that the entire school needs to be a structured and calm environment like the classroom. The organization of the school sets the tone for all the classrooms, and the training would help with setting expectations and with the way teachers deal with all children.

The respondents with a gifted endorsement were able to respond with a variety of areas that they felt would be of benefit for students. Training was noted by one as the foundation for enhancing the education that is provided for our students. This respondent continued with how the gifted student is intelligent and can use this intelligence to manipulate situations and people. “They will go to unthinkable ways to make their voices heard.”

Another respondent with an endorsement felt that the ways in which identification is handled is missing many of the underachieving gifted students. She also voiced concern over the amount of first graders who are identified too but then do not show the characteristics that are typically found in the gifted student at the higher grade levels. These concerns are associated with the topic of identification and have little to do with social and emotional development. This comment reinforced that if the training was not received from a trainer with a strong background in social and emotional development, then the topics that are truly associated with social and emotional development are not

addressed. This respondent is one who could not recall a particular course that focused on social and emotional development.

The third respondent with a gifted endorsement felt that organization is a key factor for gifted students in classrooms. She stated that training is critical and should be available to all teachers. She commented on the frustration of giving the necessary supplies or papers and finding that the next week the student has lost all the papers. “I must plan to have a second copy available.”

The administrators that were interviewed did not have the background on the elements of social and emotional development for gifted students. In meetings with administrators comments have been made that too much time is wasted on the gifted and talented student. This comment was then followed with a question on how to best serve the students that are not progressing in the grade level. More time was needed to meet the needs of the at risk students and not spent on gifted and talented strategies.

- 3). How has the training impacted the types of lessons that the teacher prepares when differentiating for the gifted students?

The responses varied according to the experience in their training development of each teacher. The participants with endorsements from University of St. Thomas did not have the background to discuss any strategies or experiences that were related to social and emotional development. The participants with training from the district’s workshops and the summer ICE program could recount specific components that have helped them as classroom teachers.

“I am able to see the child’s point of view.”

“All children are different and not created in the same mold.”

“Every child grows up following a developmental pattern, but the gifted child picks up more than the regular student.”

“As a teacher it is more important to work with the person rather than the mind.”

“They know they are different”

“Bibliotherapy has been beneficial for the classroom and the different aspects of helping children understand one another.”

“Notice with an adult mind and respond with a child’s mind.”

One respondent shared that bibliotherapy was the topic that has changed her classroom. She said that the literature that she uses “brings out the area that help children learn the social nuances in their world.” She said that the literature that is required reading for her students has a new twist, that now she can pull issues that relate to the developmental phases her students are experiencing. She also uses the knowledge of bibliotherapy to help her students choose books to read when visiting the library.

Another endorsement teacher stated that she has developed new ways to work with the students. Her knowledge of the developmental stages has also spilled over into her students. Of these students some have the gifted and talented label while others may have the tendency but have not been identified. She then shared that she is still able to help the students be successful within the classroom setting and hopefully, to learn how to adapt within our society as they grow. She also shared that she has become more flexible and views the black and white classroom structure as an area that must fluctuate with the different needs of each child. A second endorsed teacher stated that she had to change her expectations in student’s work habits and in their abilities to cope with

situations that would normally not become such a travesty within the classroom. The training allowed her to “walk through a different door with a different perspective.” The workshop training helped one respondent realize that the environment of the room is important. She shared how she changed the location of her desk and the position of teacher instruction area to better facilitate student learning. The room was filled with color and areas for students to relax, to read, or think. Small groups have been an integral part of her instruction. She has considered the importance of creating time for two newly identified gifted and talented students to work together in group settings. She stated that these two students require a different approach and now that they have shown their intelligence through the referral process she can better understand them. This careful consideration has helped one student in particular to produce higher quality work. “This positioning of students has also allowed me to differentiate the work that I assign. I know that I meeting their needs.” Another workshop participant commented that she now helps a student process through a frustration. Before the training she said that she would tell the student to go back to work. She stated that she understands that if she does not take time to listen, then the learning and the quality of the product will not be what she expects, and, most importantly, it will not be what the student is capable of producing.

Six of the eight respondents felt that this training is important for all teachers in the school. Three of the eight felt that the training should be mandatory each year. However, the respondents did not discuss the use of differentiation. The techniques and strategies associated with social and emotional development that were discussed by the respondents with knowledge to do so, were activities in addition to the cognitive

curricular design. Teachers need to revisit these components so that connections between the teacher and students continue to spark the flames of education. Teachers who deal with gifted on a daily basis feel that they have a better understanding of the students they guide. One endorsed teacher stated that teachers who have not had the training are not flexible and have unrealistic expectations about the students who think with an adult mind and react with childlike behavior. The Advanced Academic Specialist and the Executive Director both realized that the training is not a component of the requirements to obtain thirty hours of awareness that the district offers each year for teachers. It is offered during the school year at the Saturday workshops, but is not offered during the training during the week session for the summer. Standard II of the Gifted and Talented Standards states that “The teacher of gifted and talented students has comprehensive knowledge of the cognitive, social, and emotional characteristics and needs of these students.” This researcher then questions why is the training optional for the basic thirty hours of awareness?

- 4). What areas of social and emotional development training have been too time consuming for the classroom teacher to utilize in the regular classroom?

One respondent with an endorsement shared the only topic that was felt to be too difficult to implement in the classroom setting. She stated that the support group strategy was an area that she could not organize and implement within her English Language Arts class. “There is not enough time for a teacher to conduct that type of option for students.” She went on to express that so few students are identified as gifted and talented in the school, so that to justify the amount of time it would take to implement

this type of support would not be effective. She said that as a classroom teacher and also their evaluator this would not be effective for the students.

Mentoring was also mentioned as a component that would be difficult. “Schools need to look at a multiage gifted program,” a teacher replied with the six hour workshop training. She felt adamant about the importance of having older students talk with the younger ones in order to show them the path of education and how to walk it in order to be successful. “We need to lead them to what they will find at the next school.” She talked about if the gifted students know the rules and the expectations they will perform in an acceptable manner, but if they do not know them, then they worry. When the students are in a worry state they are not focused on their schoolwork.

The other topic that was felt to be difficult to implement in the classroom was that of support groups. Time seemed to be the issue with that area as well as the evaluation aspect. The teacher of record should not be the facilitator and for many schools the only teachers who have the training and knowledge to facilitate are also the student’s evaluators. Having the knowledge of literature seemed to be that answer to this dilemma. “I share the book title with parents that ask for help in areas that I cannot address within the curriculum confinements.” Many participants could not recall any activities that would be too difficult to cope with. The thought here is that they have erased the topics from their minds as if it was something that was just too difficult to replicate within the classroom setting.

Time limits were of concern to many of the respondents. The limited time that teachers have with the students and this time is impacted by the necessity to cover the required objectives mandated in the state curriculum were mentioned. One teacher

suggested a special course that has a college professor come and teach a course that deals with social and emotional issues. The response made the researcher wonder if only college professors have the knowledge to guide this type of learning in the classroom and why, as a second grade teacher, she did not have the qualifications. After all, she was one of only four teachers in the district with a gifted and talented endorsement. One respondent said that, “Time is the biggest factor, and for some teachers, the only concern appears to center on how will this help the students pass the test?” How sad that the teacher does not feel that an important part of her duty is to meet the needs of the child's mind each day.

Many of the respondents talked about the state assessment and how this requirement monopolizes their time and energy. The high expectations that the district has placed upon the staff have made much of each school's focus that of the at-risk population. One teacher commented that too much time is spent tutoring the At-Risk students so that teachers cannot spend time after school to develop and create activities that would benefit the gifted students in developing their social and emotional well being. The principal interviewed also pointed out that her main priority is to ensure that the different subpopulations show growth each academic year. The gifted students do not count as a group that is monitored by the state and impacts the campus in a positive manner on the ratings awarded the campus and district. The Advanced Academic Specialist commented that the district does not highlight any one particular component of the thirty hours of awareness. She commented that she sees less emphasis placed upon the social and emotional component in this district than in the previous district where she was affiliated. She then clarified that her principal had a child who was labeled gifted so

that, most likely, was the reason why there was such an emphasis placed upon that particular group of students. One of the endorsed teachers commented that if the child's needs are not being met in the school because of a lack of connection with the teacher or the school setting, that learning will take place outside of the school. She referred to Jim Delisle's comment about how a gifted student loves to learn, and that it is sometimes the school that turns them off.

5). What characteristics of the educator does school administration seek when assigning teachers to the identified gifted and talented students?

The characteristics important in the teacher of the gifted are to be able to meet the needs of this diverse group and to keep parents happy was the thought from the campus principal. The classroom of students identified as gifted has the most active parents. The teacher must have knowledge in providing meaningful and rigorous work. The teacher must be able to defend the content of the course work to the parents of students in the classroom. Communication is a characteristic that the teacher of the class servicing gifted and talented students must have to best meet the needs of children. Having the expertise of explaining grading procedures to help parents understand the assignment expectations helps to build the necessary relationship that must exist between parents and their child's teacher. The teacher needs to be comfortable with his or her own intelligence. Having the knowledge to design and create instructional plans based upon the level of the students is an area that is important for the campus principal. The varying levels of students assigned to this classroom mandates that a variety of levels be addressed since the class has identified gifted and talented students as well as high achieving students.

The advanced academic specialist and the director of curriculum and instruction stated that they were not involved with the hiring of teachers for the identified gifted and talented. The campus principal had only six hours of required administrator training. This training is composed of identification, assessment, and programming options for gifted students. Characteristics of teachers that would best serve the students in the classroom is not an area that is addressed. The campus principal must staff this unique classroom for students that require a different approach to their educational program.

The type of teacher that is usually associated with this classroom is one that is highly qualified with desires of higher career options. One teacher respondent from the workshop training talked about the trend of good and creative teachers opting out of teaching in the classroom. “They leave so fast to get into administration or counseling positions.” She continued with her thought on the mandates of the state accountability testing and how the pressure is pushing teachers out of the classroom. She also stated that students are shutting down after second grade. “The students need to know how much fun education can be, that anything is possible.” The regulations and the focus on testing are harming our gifted population.

The interview brought out that the campus principal is more concerned with the teacher’s personality and most importantly in their ability to keep students and parents happy. The principal then investigates to see whether this teacher has the correct credentials to be the teacher of record for the gifted classroom. If the teacher does not then the hastily required training takes place during the first academic semester.

EMERGING THEMES

From the study the following themes emerged.

- 1) The amount of time educators had for training was not key to understanding social and emotional development.
- 2) The qualifications of the trainer had more of an impact on what the participants walked away with. The importance of activities that can be implemented within the classroom setting was found to be beneficial.
- 3) Time was also a theme that many teachers spoke about throughout each interview.
- 4) Incorporating personnel other than classroom teachers to help facilitate social and emotional development of gifted students is efficient and helpful.
- 5) The state requirements that each school district is to abide by does not adequately meet that affective domain as it speaks more to the cognitive domain.

The key to understanding social and emotional development is not the amount of time participants experience in training. Whether six-hour workshop training versus thirty hours of university training is better is inconsequential, but the qualifications of the presenter and the understanding that the trainer possesses is what is important. The teachers who gained a knowledgeable understanding participated in training that offered specific classroom strategies and activities that could be easily replicated in the classroom. The participants also walked away with the basic understanding of why students respond in the manner in which they do in the classroom setting. Comments from the interviews also showed the importance this training had on the classroom

structure and within the actual setting of organizing the classroom. The participants shared their feeling that this training links with the focus of forming relationships with students. The training that the participants have had as a district focus provided a connection to the basic premise of the importance of relationship building. Comments that were excerpted from the interviews are:

”I used to think that reading a book was solely for the purpose of checking the student’s comprehension. Now I know that the book can help a student understand a particular situation.”

“Using literature to not only complete teacher academic objectives, but then to also bring out the areas that help children learn the social nuances in their world.”

“I learned that the classroom can be a haven for gifted children. If they need a safe place to have a break down, then they could come here and I would understand.”

“If you teach gifted students at all this training should be mandatory.”

“I became interested in Jim Delisle and bought the book, *Growing Good Kids* and have used some of the activities in my classroom.”

“Parents ask for ideas and suggestions in conferences and I have titles of books and author’s names to share so that they can help with issues that are interfering with home and school.”

“What’s not in our educational books is how you teach the children in dealing with their differences and then help them to celebrate.”

“Until I took the course, I was not able to help the children find the areas so they can grow into a leader.”

“Before I would tell a student to get back to work, now I know that they need my guidance and instruction and help on dealing with their ability to know how different they truly are.”

“When I attend conferences, I seek out speakers that I heard about in the training. Jim Delisle is one that I always will seek out.”

“You cannot teach the head until you teach their heart.”

The advanced level of understanding that the trainer possesses leaves the participant with a wide base of knowledge. The trainer must give the participants specific reasons why a child reacts and behaves in the manner in which he/she does. The trainer must introduce activities to show the teachers how to help the gifted student in the classroom. The comment that was heard in many interviews points out that all teachers need to have this training. This training will help all teachers in their day to day classroom management practices. Many participants referred to training need due to the fact that some students who are gifted do not obtain the official school district gifted label. Yet, these students will exhibit characteristics of the gifted profiles. Having all the teachers within a school setting trained would help to alleviate the fact that some students are then penalized rather than helped when reacting and showing their true gifted behaviors in a stressful arena.

Time was a critical factor in many of the interviews. This factor causes a limited view for the faculty when looking at options to best meet the needs of gifted students. Alternative personnel such as counselors and librarians who might offer a variety of programming options are areas that schools can look for additional support. This area, time, for a teacher is one area that arises whenever there is a problem that needs a

solution. The school setting continues to introduce new topics of learning and yet never evaluates and extinguishes the learning that is not necessary. Having other personnel on the campus help with support groups and alternate groupings to help with developing skills to conduct research or enhancing techniques for working with others, could be accomplished with personnel that is not normally found in the classroom setting. The library should become the research center, and the librarian should act as the facilitator for this process. The school counselor could provide the support groups as the facilitator. The relationship that students have with the counselor is not one of an evaluative role so the students could feel free to share and discuss. A school that has the philosophy that learning takes place throughout the building, and that everyone is involved will most certainly accomplish the task of helping the gifted student understand what it means to be gifted.

The requirement of teachers having to obtain thirty hours of awareness to be the documented teacher of record causes concerns in that school districts are then required to choose the areas that are used in the training options. The school districts must furnish hours in the areas of nature and needs of gifted and talented students, assessing students' needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students according to the state plan. This requirement is from section four of the state plan for acceptable, recognized, and exemplary gifted and talented programs. This requirement is for a school district to be deemed acceptable according to the state measures. The plan also dictates that administrators and counselors need to have a minimum of six hours in the area of nature and needs and program options for gifted and talented students. To receive the exemplary label this requirement must be fulfilled on an annual basis. When reviewing

the Texas State Plan for educating gifted students, the question and answer documents states that the local district has the decision as to who will provide the training each year. The Texas Administrative Code does not clearly delineate what topics need to be addressed in each of the three required areas, but only that these modules must be a minimum of six-hour increments. This also allows for training to be of the same topic offerings year after year. This training then can become stagnate and not help to best facilitate the needed change within our classrooms. The respondents mentioned that they would hear a different viewpoint when another presenter was used during the yearly offered training. The use of different trainers is then a hardship placed upon the confinements of adequately knowledgeable people based within the district.

When reviewing the document for Gifted and Talented Standards the area of social and emotional characteristics and needs of the students is documented within the second standard. “Standard II - The teacher of the gifted and talented students has comprehensive knowledge of the cognitive, social, and emotional characteristics and needs of these students.” This standard states the importance of providing social and emotional development for our students, and yet only teachers who have had training that specifically offers strategies and techniques to implement within the classroom do so.

With the area of social and emotional development specified within the standards, it is necessary for school districts to include this topic as a mandatory piece to the required thirty hours of awareness. The interviews that were conducted had a common thread running throughout that repeated the importance that all teachers within a school building should receive the training. The practices, understanding of children, and the

importance of helping our children develop their leadership abilities is a critical element in educating our gifted and talented youth.

AREAS THAT NEED ATTENTION

Topics that must be covered in the training sessions need to have specific areas that must be addressed. The topic of social and emotional development is critical to a classroom and most importantly, to the entire school building. The research that has been conducted and the interviews that were collected show that the awareness in this topic has made a positive impact within classrooms and in some school buildings. Leaving the decision to school districts to decide who will conduct the training and then to determine what topics will be covered is allowing some teachers to walk away with credentials to teach our gifted and talented students without truly understanding why they think and act as they do.

The training that is conducted must have presenters who are truly educated in the areas of their presentation. The presenter must have in depth knowledge and a true understanding for the topic that they present. When talking with some respondents it seemed as if they had participated in training that merely consisted of check-off items so that they could then return and teach in the classroom. The participant walks away without the capability to discuss the topic, or even worse, unable to implement strategies within their classroom to help and guide our youth. The participants who have this weakened knowledge of gifted and talented needs are not capable of speaking and acting as true advocates for our students. Trainers who understand their roles in developing young minds and hearts will truly help change education to involve the development of

their minds as well as their compassion for others. This in depth training will truly help change our schools, its activities, and the very words that are positively demonstrated inside the schools each day.

The fact that teachers who have participated in training cannot cite many of the renowned researchers conducting research in areas social and emotional development concerns this researcher. When speaking with parents and developing a professional rapport, it is important that authority and knowledge is imparted. The common thought that theory and research should not be the focus of workshops is of concern. When reviewing the component of the No Child Left Behind Act, much of the funding practice is designated to establishing programs that are research based. If the training does not allow teachers to gain a wealth of references to cite and base their development of programs for the gifted on, then how can such programs be valued? The thought that teachers want hands on and low level thinking training only supports the recent push for higher level assessment practices within this state. If the teachers are presenting and then assessing their students in the ways that they want to have their professional development presented and assessed, then our students will not be able to fulfill the highly rigorous state accountability measures that continue to reach for new levels. When reading the research that is presented in the book, *No Excuses*, teachers must have a high content base in order to better educate their students. As Thernstrom & Thernstrom (2003) state, “They do need academic skills, a talent for communicating ideas, and some sense of calling” (p.251).

The standards that have been developed for teachers is an area that speaks specifically of social and emotional development. Standard II states that “The teacher of

the gifted and talented students has comprehensive knowledge of the cognitive, social, and emotional characteristics and needs of these students.” The need to address this topic and help schools develop meaningful techniques and programs to guide our youth is mandatory. The violence and the resistance to accept others is an area that schools need to have programs in place so that youth can process and find ways to adapt that are deemed appropriate in our society. Many times throughout the interviews the teachers stated that this training is important for all teachers in a building.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study was guided by the following questions about the specific training options that educators of the gifted and talented student have received. The components of the training that are applied into the classroom setting and are felt to be necessary for the development of social and emotional issues must be the focus in the training elements. How has the teacher utilized the training differentiating for the gifted and talented students? To identify the elements that are too difficult for a teacher to implement within the classroom setting and produce alternatives in order for students to receive the knowledge. Develop a description of the characteristics that are necessary for an educator for the gifted and talented student to display.

1). The training opportunities must include strong background and understanding of the research and the key people who have studied this topic. Teachers receiving the training from a trainer who felt this topic to be the key to the gifted student’s overall success in school walked away with strategies as well as with the understanding of the importance to find time to develop the concepts within their classroom. Teachers

receiving the training from a presenter that knew deeply about the subject also realized the importance of helping to establish school wide programs. Some of the teachers better understand how to deal with students and their behaviors, which can impact other students in the classroom learning process. Some teachers have the understanding that content is important, but that also, the importance of building relationships is the key to becoming a successful teacher. Some teachers cited that the training was important, and that all teachers working with children need to have this understanding. The training provided them with techniques, but mostly with understanding so that they were able to react in a positive manner to help a student who exhibited behaviors that were not reflective of those of that student's particular age group.

2). Components of the school district training must integrate components of social and emotional development in the training, most specifically into the original thirty hours of awareness. This training is essential to the development of gifted students, and it is an integral part of the thirty hours of awareness. The Gifted and Talented Standards characterizes the pieces that are required, but as evident throughout the interviews, the concepts and strategies important for social and emotional development of gifted students are not being addressed through current training opportunities. The school must first address the teaching of the heart, and then the teaching of the mind, as one respondent shared. The study showed the importance of implementing staff development that introduces and revisits topics so that improvement can continue after the original six hours of training. The need for teachers to learn and share strategies and implementation is an area that should be incorporated within the training process. This learning technique is one in which we show importance and value for the students, so teachers

utilizing this technique can model the strategy for the students. Teachers sharing the techniques that work best for their classroom will help a larger group of teachers to implement in many classrooms. This will improve the educational settings for the gifted students in the classroom.

3). Training options for teachers need to stress that content and complete understanding is more important than walking away with cute activities that do not impact the students. It is evident from the teachers' lack of understanding and recall after attending six hours of training that the learning is not impacting teachers in deep, insightful ways. The state assessment accountability is requiring our students to perform at higher levels of understanding; therefore, the educators in our schools must also be performing at higher levels during their individual training sessions. This practice is necessary so that our students have relevant programs and educational practices. This formula using current research applications will not only enhance their knowledge, but will also be of a level that can be justified with the state and national pressure. The current push of implementing high standards within all instructional programs that are now upon our schools must be modeled in the training that teachers receive as well. Conducting training sessions with higher thinking levels and establishing requirements to denote implementation within the educational programs offered will also help our students. Practicing the strategies that benefit the students and sharing this learning with other educators will help the teachers better meet the needs of the gifted students.

4). The issue of time was discussed in many interviews and seems to be a catch all phrase for many teachers. The absence of having enough time is an excuse that is allowing the teachers not to meet the needs of the gifted students. This area could best be

serviced with providing more training on alternative assessments so that students can move quickly through the instructional process. Showing the teachers that they do know the material and are ready for something else will best meet the needs of the gifted students. The use of alternative personnel who can provide the affective lessons that will not actually receive a grade can also help in this area. Without proper training in alternative assessment, there is no desire to incorporate activities that will not be graded at the conclusion.

5). The characteristic that an administrator looks for in the teacher of the gifted is confidence in his/her teaching. This teacher will have many parent advocates who could easily turn into a group of attackers. The teacher must respond well to the pressure that the parents place upon the gifted students and the school programs. Having a teacher that understands the difference between the gifted and high achieving student is crucial to the success of the identified gifted students.

In conclusion the school district must embrace the commitment to incorporate a philosophy to combine the importance of a student's social and emotional development with their attainment of the Texas Essential Knowledge Skills. Without emotional well being, the students will not progress in their studies as they are expected to do each school year. When reading a school district's mission statement, I find that it states that students will become contributing members of the society. Without guidance as to how to cooperate with others, how best to relate when working with others, how to overcome perfectionism and other inadequacies that hinder the development of our children, the district will only produce new members into our society who are ineffective. We will

produce new members who will impede the development of others in our society, especially within the workforce.

The benefits of having training in social and emotional development will not only help the students, but will help adults to understand why the children react and behave as they do. In some cases, it helps the adults to understand why other adults behave as they do. The training components can enhance a classroom as well as the entire school building if the teachers share this philosophy. The training is not something to be looked at as merely something else for the gifted, but instead, as a program that can enhance all children. Many times the gifted are viewed as members of an island within the school building. This training can bring the island into a relationship that can build a bridge and help all students value and respect the differences that are apparent in the ways our children behave, react, and value one another.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Marzano and Marzano (2003) state “teacher- student relationships should not be left to chance or dictated by the personalities of those involved”(p.12). Creating schools that help build students social and emotional development within all academic subjects is an area that deserves much focus and attention. The knowledge of understanding one’s emotional development helps students grasp the possibilities of their future.

This study has created more questions whose answers would enhance our understanding of programming options for the gifted and talented within our schools.

These areas are:

- 1.) Establish a comparison study using school districts located in both an urban and a rural area. This study concentrated input from a suburban school district in the Gulf

Coast Region. Using varied geographical areas that also link to other university systems would produce knowledge in training options used in the state.

- 2.) In depth study to determine the relationship of gifted and talented students labeled with Attention Hyperactivity and Attention Disorder (ADHD) to their creativity potential.
- 3.) A future study of gifted and talented students exhibiting ADHD tendencies within a classroom to determine if there is a linking characteristic to Dabrowski's overexcitabilities.
- 4.) Future research should also be conducted to explore the number of students labeled with ADHD that are gifted and talented as compared with students of average intelligence.
- 5.) A study to identify the extent of bibliotherapy techniques being utilized in the classroom curriculum and the effects such use has on student performance.
- 6.) A longitudinal study of discipline referrals made from teachers holding gifted and talented endorsements with strong backgrounds in social and emotional development as compared with teachers who receive the basic thirty hours of awareness.

This study has produced techniques and philosophical statements that are felt to be a necessary component for an effective classroom as well as the school building.

Relationship building is a key component that has been mentioned in several respondents' statements. Mendes (2003) interprets Psychologist Carl Rogers' (1951) description of an ideal teacher and student relationship to that of a therapist with his patient, "...one in which the therapist is genuine and nonjudgmental, providing unconditional positive regard"(p.57). Additional research and understanding will only

help to improve the educational experiences that occur buildings in which our students arrive each day to gain knowledge in cognition and affective areas.

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APPENDIX A**Interview Protocol for Teachers of the Gifted**

1. When did you first become involved in teaching gifted and talented students?
2. How many hours of training in social and emotional development have you received?
3. How many hours of social and emotional training was accumulated as workshop hours?
4. How many hours of social and emotional training was university type offerings?
5. Describe the topics covered during the social and emotional training you received.
6. Describe how the topics covered during the social and emotional training have been the most beneficial.
7. To what extent is social and emotional development training necessary within your classroom setting?
8. To what extent is social and emotional development training necessary within the school?
9. Describe the topics covered during the social and emotional training that have not been beneficial.
10. What topics were covered during the training that you find are too difficult to implement within the classroom setting?
11. Why do you feel some topics or strategies are too difficult to implement?
12. In what ways could the social and emotional training be improved?
13. Describe changes that have occurred within your classroom based on the knowledge acquired from the social and emotional training.
14. What else can you share about social and emotional training that has not been discussed?

Interview Protocol for the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction

1. What format of social and emotional training have you received?
2. What importance does the district place upon social and emotional training?
3. Describe the district's role in providing social and emotional training for the gifted.
4. As the executive director of curriculum and instruction for this district, how does this topic, social and emotional development, impact a typical day for you in your role as executive director?
5. Describe the topics that are necessary for social and emotional training?
6. What type of teacher best fits the model of teacher for the gifted?
7. How involved are you in the hiring of teachers for the gifted and talented?
8. Describe the social and emotional training that is required for teachers of the gifted to accumulate.
9. Describe the social and emotional training that is offered through the district for teachers of the gifted and talented.
10. How do you evaluate the social and emotional training that is offered to the teachers within the district?
11. To what extent are the requirements for social and emotional training required for teachers of the gifted and talented?
12. What other comments do you have about your job as executive director of curriculum and instruction in relation to social and emotional development?

Interview Protocol for the Advanced Academic Specialist

1. What format of social and emotional training have you received?
2. What importance does the district place upon social and emotional training?
3. Describe the district's role in providing social and emotional training for the gifted.
4. As the specialist for this district, how does this topic, social and emotional development, impact a typical day for you in your role as specialist?
5. Describe the topics that are necessary for social and emotional training?
6. What type of teacher best fits the model of teacher for the gifted?
7. How involved are you in the hiring of teachers for the gifted and talented?
8. Describe the social and emotional training that is required for teachers of the gifted to accumulate.
9. Describe the social and emotional training that is offered through the district for teachers of the gifted and talented.
10. How do you evaluate the social and emotional training that is offered to the teachers within the district?
11. To what extent are the requirements for social and emotional training required for teachers of the gifted and talented?
12. What other comments do you have about your job as gifted program specialist in relation to social and emotional development?

Interview Protocol for the Campus Principal

1. What type of teacher best fits the model of teacher for the gifted?
2. What importance do you place upon the type of training the teachers in your building receive?
3. Describe your role in providing training of the gifted for the teachers on your campus.
4. As the campus principal, how does the topic of social and emotional development impact a typical day for you in your role as principal?
5. Describe the training that you have received for gifted and talented.
6. Describe the social and emotional training that is required for teachers of the gifted to accumulate and if and how that is important to you as the campus principal.
7. How do you evaluate the social and emotional training that is offered to the teachers within the district?
8. To what extent are the requirements for social and emotional training required for teachers of the gifted and talented?
9. What other comments do you have about your job as campus principal in relation to gifted and talented / social and emotional development?

APPENDIX B

Six Hour Workshop

1. J. Delisle's Quiz - Myths of Gifted Education
2. Activity – Feelings and Emotions – My Many Colored Days
3. Erikson's Eight Life-Span Developmental Crises
4. Trouble Traits – G. Betts
5. Activity – Group task with Five Traits
6. Activity – Share a Success
7. Affective Skills – Compiled by J. Juntune, 1994
8. Activity – Words from Virginia Satir / Your Many Famous Faces
9. Eight Great Gripes – Galbraith, J. and Delisle, J.
10. Activity - Effects Wheel
11. Activity – Byrd Baylor – The Best Town in the World
12. Expanded Venn Diagram for Overlapping Concepts
13. Mentorships
14. Intensity – J. Delisle
15. Activity – Invent-A –Feeling – based on the work of B. Eberle
16. Difficulties and Needs of the Gifted
17. Forces of Emotional Development of the Gifted
18. Four Modes of Expression – Tristine Rainer
19. Peer Questionnaire
20. 12 Tips for Making and Keeping Friends – J. Delisle
21. Ten Tips for Talking to Teachers - Galbraith, J. Espeland, D.

22. Forecasting – Cause and Effects – J. Juntune
23. How Much of a Perfectionist are You Quiz? – Adderholt – Elliot, 1987
24. Games Perfectionists Play – Adderholt & Goldberg

APPENDIX C**Thirty Hours Workshop at the University Level****Day One****Social and Emotional Development of the Gifted Student**

J. Delisle Quiz used from the book:

Dabrowski's Overexcitabilities

George Betts – Trouble Traits

Positive Disintegration – Dabrowski

Affective Characteristics Associated with Giftedness

Characteristics of Perfectionism

Games Perfectionists Play – Adderholt & Goldberg

Ten Tips on Combating Perfectionism – Galbraith & Delisle

Forecasting – Cause and Effect

Activities

My Many Colored Days – Dr. Seuss

The Best Town in the World – Byrd Baylor

Your Many Famous Faces – Virginia Satir

Perfectionism Quiz – M. Adderholt & Elliot

Thirty Hours Workshop at the University Level

Day Two

Beginning a Bibliotherapy Program

1. Determine Specific Issues / Problems
2. Consult with the librarian
3. Organize the System
 - a. Pertinent Information
 - b. Complete Bibliographic Information
 - c. Brief summary of the book
 - d. Reading level
4. Use within the Classroom
5. Things to Remember

Visual Graphics:

Venn Diagram

Expanded Venn Diagram

Thirty Hours Workshop at the University Level

Day Three

Counseling and Guidance Issues

1. Excerpts from B. Kerr's - *Handbook for Counseling the Gifted and Talented*
 - Guide the Talent
 - Show Curiosity
 - Become Involved
2. Four Modes of Expression in Journal Writing
 - Cartharsis
 - Descriptive
 - Free- Intuitive
 - Reflection
3. Daily Journal
4. Notes of Group Counseling – N. Colangelo and J. Peterson in Linda Silverman's book – *Counseling the Gifted and Talented*
 - a. Gifted need opportunities with peers for self-discovery and communication of interpersonal and intrapersonal issues
 - b. Goal of support groups
 - c. A support is more than sitting around and talking
 - d. Definition of a peer
 - e. Strategies: Vertical and Horizontal
 - f. "Talking together in an atmosphere of honor and respect"
 - g. Initial support group sessions should be non-threatening.
 - h. Leader – needs to be:

- Be Child-Centered
 - Sensitive to needs of the gifted
 - Neither intimidated by the gifted or in awe of them
 - Does not have “personal agendas”
 - Willing to “learn by doing”
5. Possible Questions to use in a support group
 6. Guidelines for Support Groups
 7. Some Major Irrational Beliefs
 8. Feelings Calendar for the Week / Month
 9. Guidelines for Support Groups – G. Betts
 10. Guidelines for the Group Leader
 11. Suggestions for the Group Leader
 12. Sample Questions to Use in an Adult Initiated Support Group – Juntune & Ansley, 1984
 13. The Eight Great Grips of Gifted Kids – Schmitz & Galbraith
 14. School and Classroom Assessment – Schools in the Middle, (Sept/Oct, 1996). P.19

Activities:

Invent a Feeling – Bob Eberle

Thirty Hours Workshop at the University Level

Day Four

The Gifted and School

1. Counseling Services for the Gifted – Juntune, 1999
2. Small Change – J. Delisle, 1992
 - a. Within the curriculum
 - b. Grading procedures and student evaluation
 - c. The classroom environment
 - d. Disciplinary procedures
3. Regular Activities for Building Social and Emotional Wellness
4. Accelerated Schools of Denver - Winning Systems – Carl Peterson
5. Journey into Self – G. Betts, 1985
6. Difficulties and Needs of the Gifted
7. Forces for Emotional Development of the Gifted
8. Linkage of Characteristics of Gifted to Counseling Approaches
9. Excellence in Education of the Gifted, J. VanTassel-Baska, 1989
10. Decision Making Steps
11. Gifted Girls – B. Kerr, 1994
12. Characteristics of Leadership
13. Highly Gifted Students
14. Common Reasons for Lack of Motivation
15. Ways to Keep Gifted Students Motivated
16. Educational Objectives for Reducing Underachievement in Schools, Nava Butler-Por,

1987 & Rimm, 1995

17. Ten Tips for Talking To Teachers – Galbraith, J. & Espeland, D. 1988

18. 12 Tips for Making and Keeping Friends, Delisle, J.

19. Peer Questionnaire

Thirty Hours Workshop at the University Level

Day Five

Special Topics and Concerns

1. Mentorships
2. Frequently Occurring Problems

Activities:

1. Share a Success

VITA

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EDUCATION

May, 1986 University of Houston- Clear Lake Houston, TX
Master of Science in Educational Management with Mid-Management Administrator
Certification

May, 1982 The University of Texas at Austin Austin, TX
Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Concentration in Reading

EXPERIENCE

2004-Present Clear Creek Independent School District - Principal
2000-2004 Pearland Independent School District - Principal
1997-2000 Clear Creek Independent School District - Assistant Principal
1994-1997 Clear Creek Independent School District - Gifted & Talented Specialist
1992-1994 Clear Creek Independent School District - Teacher
1991-1992 University of Houston – Clear Lake - University Supervisor
1986-1991 Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District – Teacher
1982-1986 Crosby Independent School District - Teacher

CERTIFICATIONS

Framework of Poverty Trainer of Training – Dr. Ruby Payne, December, 2003
ILT to ILD Training – Region IV – June 2003
Principal Assessment (SASA) – Region IV – June 2002
Structure of the Intellect Training – Dr. Paul Slocomb, May 2000
Peer Mediation Training – Chrysalis Corporation, Fall 1999
De Bono's Six Hat Problem Solving – Dr. Joyce Juntune, May 1999
Gifted and Talented Endorsement – Texas A&M University, May 1998
Structured Interview Training –Gallup Poll, 1997
Professional Development Appraisal System Training with Region IV, Summer 1997 and
1998
Instructional Leadership Training at Region IV, Fall 1997