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Table of Contents

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EDITORIAL

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By The Numbers

Many educators probably spend a fair amount of time reading. There are a seemingly endless number of memos from state education bureaucrats, the daily inflow of work related emails, and the host of armchair edu-journals. I have been trying to enlarge my literature choices during the past few years and the summer months always seem like a good time to add another selection to an already overcrowded night stand.

Several years ago I started reading *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, anything from the Center for Economic and Policy Research, Nouriel Roubini's *Econmonito*r blog, *Harvard Business Review*, *Entrepreneur* magazine, and *Harpers* magazine. The foreign policy and economics literature is especially helpful to understand the macro-economic environment and how that environment is pushing market/corporate reforms into education. With all due respect to those that think education achievement on international or national assessments has a direct impact on the largest economies in the world , they really need to read more about industrial policy. That is what makes economies move, not your students' state or international test scores.

The *Harvard Business Review* and *Entrepreneur* magazine drive home the point that a one-size fits all, static national curriculum enforced with a national test is not going to engender innovation, creativity, socially conscious problem solving, resilience, persistence, motivation, empathy, and drive to succeed. *Harpers* magazine covers a wide range of topics from the economy to the arts, but it is the *Harpers Index* that I like most. The monthly feature presents interesting data-bytes that always make me think. So to pay homage to one of my favorite reads I put together an index of not-so-random statistics to perhaps jumpstart some more summer reading.

Stats

1. United States ranking on the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) of 142 countries during the last 17 years (World Economic Forum, 1995-2012):

    - 2011-12 5
    - 2010-11 4
    - 2009-10 2
    - 2008-09 1
    - 2007-08 1
    - 2006-07 6
    - 2005-06 1
    - 2004-05 2
    - 2003-04 2
    - 2002-03 2
    - 2001-02 1
    - 2000-01 2
    - 1999-00 2
    - 1998-99 2
    - 1997-98 3
    - 1996-97 3
    - 1995-96 4
    - Average rank: 2.4 out of 142

2. US rank of researchers per 1,000 employed: 4th behind Sweden, Japan, and Singapore (Atkinson & Andes, 2009). China ranked 19th behind countries such as Poland and Ireland.

3. US rank of the world's share of scientific and technical publications: 2nd behind Sweden. China ranked 21st (Atkinson & Andes, 2009). .

4. US 2011 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) ranking: 1st
   - China: 2nd
   - India: 3rd
   - Japan: 4th
   - Germany: 5th
   - Russia: 6th
   - Brazil: 7th

   Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, 2012)

5. US per capita (per person) GDP rank: 12th, $48,100
   China: 120th 8,400 (CIA, 2012)

6. US GPD per working age adult ages 25-64 rank: 1st, $89,422 (Atkinson & Andes, 2009)

7. Number one reason given for nationalizing and centralizing the curriculum and assessment of US public schools via the unproven Common Core State Standards and national testing: Global competiveness. Really?

8. Poverty line threshold for a family of three in the continental United States and District of Columbia: $19, 090 (USDHHS, 2012)

9. Poverty line threshold for a family of four in the continental United States and District of Columbia: $23,050 (USDHHS, 2012)

10. Percentage of American children under age six living at or below the poverty level: 25.8 (USCB, 2012)

11. Percentage of American children under age 18, in a single parent household headed by a female living at or below the poverty level: 45.6 (USCB, 2012)

12. Percentage of Americans ages 18-24, with no high school diploma, living in poverty: 35.3 (USCB, 2012)

13. US average life expectancy international ranking: 50th / 221 countries at 78.49 years. Monaco: 1st, 89.68 years, and Italy: 10th, 81.86 years (CIA, 2012)

14. US spending on Health Care: 2nd / 189 countries. Monaco: 145th, Italy: 135th
    (CIA, 2012)

15. US death rate ranking: 143rd /230 countries with 8.38 people per 1,000. Cuba 116th /230 with 7.52 people per 1,000 (CIA, 2012)

16. US infant mortality international ranking: 48th/222 countries with 5.98 infants per 1,000. Cuba 39th / 222 countries with 4.83 infants per 1,000 (CIA, 2012)

17. US ranking of education spending: 44 / 163, 5.5% of GDP. Finland: 33rd. Cuba: 2nd. Countries that spend a similar percentage of GDP (5.6%-5-3%) on education: France, Ethiopia, Great Britain, Vietnam, Ghana, South Africa, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia (CIA, 2012)

18. US ranking on the GINI Coefficient: (Distribution of income / gap in income between the richest and poorest citizens. Lower ranking means a more equitable distribution of income a smaller gap between the richest and poorest citizens).
    - Sweden: 1
    - Finland: 11
    - USA: 94
    - Countries comparable to USA: Cameroon, Iran, Bulgaria, Jamaica, Uruguay, Guyana, and Cambodia (CIA, 2012)

19. US unemployment rate rank: 103 /200: Closer to #1 is desirable (CIA, 2012)

20. US oil production rank: 3rd behind Saudi Arabia and Russia (CIA, 2012)

21. US worldwide oil exports rank: 11th(CIA, 2012)

22. US domestic natural gas production international rank: 1st (CIA, 2012)

23. US worldwide exports rank: 2nd behind China. Overall imports: 1st, China is 2nd(CIA, 2012)

24. US illicit drug import/consumption: Number one consumer of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana (CIA, 2012)

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Research Article

The Response to Intervention Framework and Nurturing Potential: Promising Practices

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Abstract

The author's purpose for this article is to examine the use of the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework to meet the needs of a continuum of learners, from those who most struggle to those in need of advanced educational opportunities. Through classroom observations, teacher interviews, and dialogue with the site-based Problem-Solving Team, principal, and a focus group, the author examined one school's utilization of the model. With support of school administrators as a critical component, the RtI framework proved to be an effective means for addressing the needs and nurturing the potential of all learners, and for identifying and supporting gifted learners. The findings from this study have important implications with regard to school administrators' support of instructional practices in general, as well as specifically for gifted programming practices.

Key Words

Response to Intervention, administration, potential, advanced learners, collaborative practice

Introduction

As district personnel zero in on helping students who struggle to attain proficiency while also dealing with deep budget cuts, programming for our nation's brightest students has been diminishing (Beisser, 2008).

Beisser noted, "According to responses from multiple teachers, coordinators of gifted and talented programs, administrators, and parents…gifted students are overlooked and underserved" (p. 3).

Historically, ethnic minority and low socioeconomic status (SES) students have been over-represented in special education (Burns, Jacob, & Wagner, 2008; Fletcher, Coulter, Reschly, & Vaughn, 2004). Conversely, it is well documented that gifted programs traditionally reflect an underrepresentation of students from ethnic minority and low socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds (Delcourt, Cornell, & Goldberg, 2007; Passow & Frasier, 1996).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) both encourage the use of a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework to ensure positive outcomes for all students.

The legislation moves away from an arbitrary number used to determine placement in a program toward a process by which the classroom teacher, in collaboration with school administrators, support staff, and other school personnel, provides effective, evidence-based instruction and interventions based on the demonstrated needs and strengths of the learner.

Gifted Programming

The history of programs for gifted learners stretches back to the turn of the century concurrent with the onset of compulsory education laws creating an influx of students into public schools (Donovan & Cross, 2002). According to the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) website, "In the late 1800s, Dr. William T. Harris, Superintendent of Schools in St. Louis, discussed a plan for the acceleration of gifted students so they would have more challenging work and not fall under the spell of laziness" (NAGC, 2008).

It is noted that by 1920, "approximately two-thirds of all large cities had created some type of program for gifted students" (Colangelo & Davis, 2003, p. 6).

There has been a tendency to alternate between advocacy for excellence or for equity. Colangelo and Davis (2003) described a "love-hate" relationship with giftedness and talent, pointing out that we admire exceptional talent and drive in individuals, while at the same time maintaining a long-standing commitment to egalitarianism in our educational systems.

There has been resentment on the part of some who view gifted education as elitist and giving to the "haves" (p. 3). In an article examining the *Assumptions Underlying the Identification of Gifted and Talented Students,* Brown et al. (2005) asserted, "Procedures for identifying gifted and talented students are probably the most discussed and written about topic in our field." They further indicated, "For the better part of the previous century, test scores dominated the identification process" (p. 68).

Response to Intervention and Gifted Learners

A shift in thinking is required to address the over-reliance on IQ and aptitude scores when identifying high potential learners. Ford, author of *Equity and Excellence: Culturally Diverse Students in Gifted Education* (in Colangelo &

Davis, 2003), wrote about this shift in practice. The following table (Table 1) is adapted from her recommendations for embracing a more contemporary and broad view of gifted learners (p. 513):

Table 1

A Shift in Thinking

Traditional Beliefs and Practices	Contemporary Beliefs and Practices
Identification is a yes or no answer based on an achievement or intelligence score	Identification focuses on a profile of student strengths and needs
Measurement = a single test	Measurement = assessing in multiple ways with multiple sources
Ability is rewarded and must be demonstrated	Effort, achievement and potential are recognized
Genetics determine giftedness	Environment and genetics play a role in the characteristics of gifted learners
Students are in a gifted program	Students receive gifted services
Gifted education is a place	Gifted education is not a place
A question of excellence versus equity	Excellence and equity are not mutually exclusive
Gifted education is a privilege	Gifted education is a need

[Ford in Colangelo and Davis, *Handbook of Gifted Education* (3rd ed.) 2003]

If one uses the contemporary beliefs as a guide, programming for high potential learners must be transformed. A single test score does not give the practitioner information

regarding learner strengths, interests, areas of passion, or areas of relative weakness. The body of evidence gathered in a process consistent with contemporary beliefs provides a "road map" to help teachers understand what high-potential learners need and how to meet those needs.

The hallmark of RtI according to Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, and Ball (2007) is the "combination of systematic progress monitoring and movement across tiers of intervention for making decisions…" (p. 619).

The profile of the learner's strengths used within the RtI framework guides decisions regarding appropriate curriculum, instruction, assessment, enrichment, extension, depth, and complexity targeted to develop individual student potential.

With this approach, students identified as gifted are provided with programming and services to meet their identified strengths and needs; they are not identified *for* a "program." Gone are the days when the "gifted kids" leave the "regular" classroom at 10:20 a.m. on Tuesday to play chess or create a diorama in the "gifted" resource room.

The contemporary gifted education philosophy provides programming to address the academic and social emotional needs of the learner, not as a reward or privilege of the "label." Further, programming is an extension of content and standards to ensure commensurate growth for the learner, as opposed to separate enrichment projects added on to the "regular" curriculum.

So, how can the Response to Intervention framework support the needs of all learners? How can the framework be used to support the needs of gifted learners? How can the approach be used to identify and support the needs of ethnic minority and low SES learners for inclusion in gifted programming? I examined these questions through a selective case study comprised of teachers and leaders at a public elementary school in a suburban district in Colorado.

Case Study

The linkage of general and special education efforts, particularly with respect to the disproportional over identification of ethnic minority students for special education and under identification of ethnic minority students for gifted programming, was a focus of this study. This was a single revelatory case wherein "lessons learned" were sought from the study site.

Researcher bias was controlled through careful application of case study procedures. The research design incorporated multiple forms of data and a clearly delineated process for identifying and examining the emergent patterns and themes regarding the implementation of the RtI framework.

Phases of the Study

This study was conducted in three phases (Table 2), taking full advantage of the agility in allowing initial data gathering to inform next steps.

Table 2

Phases of the Study

Source	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Observations	• **Classrooms** • **Problem-Solving Team** Document Teacher and PST practices		
Interviews		• **Teachers** • **Principal** • **Problem-Solving Team** Contextualize observed practices and document emergent themes	• **Focus Group** Solidify overall impressions and themes garnered in phases I and II

Sample School and Participants

Five schools were identified as possible study sites in order to ensure a sufficient number of volunteers at a single site for participation in the teacher observations and interviews. My day-to-day work with building administrators and teachers in several areas of educational programming informed the identification of potential study sites.

The five schools were identified and ranked based on strong leadership commitment to a school-wide RtI process and specific programming for gifted learners. One school at a time was approached until a site with the sufficient number of participants was identified.

The principal, teacher subjects, and Problem-Solving Team members at the first site were invited to participate in the case study after an introductory e-mail communication and follow-up informational meeting for potential participants.

In the informational meeting, I outlined the process for observations, interviews, and the anticipated commitment on the part of the participants. At the close of the meeting, the principal, eight problem-solving team members, and five individual teachers expressed excitement for the study and volunteered to participate.

Methodology

The case study methodology involved:

- classroom observations of five licensed teachers,
- interviews with five licensed teachers and the school principal,
- observation and dialogue with the eight member site-based

Problem-Solving Team (PST), and

- a focus group comprised of the site principal, teachers and problem-solving team members to provide additional detail and context to the findings.

Each of the five teachers was observed once for 30 to 45 minutes, noting the cultural forces introduced by Ritchhart (2002). These include time, opportunities, routines and structures, language, modeling, interactions and relationships, physical environment, and expectations. Two 50-minute observations of the site's Problem-Solving Team meetings were conducted, noting the physical environment, interactions and relationships, process, and language/expectations. I conducted interviews with the five teacher participants, the principal, problem-solving team, and a focus group. The questions utilized (Table 3) were purposeful in exploring the research questions regarding the use of the RtI framework with all learners. Clarifying and probing questions stemming from the observation of the classrooms and problem-solving team were included in the interview sessions.

Table 3:
Questions asked of participants

Target	Questions
Teachers	• Tell me about your background knowledge of RtI (when/how you first became aware of the framework; over time, how implementation of the process has taken shape in your classroom, etc.). • Describe how you determine what your students know and are able to do. • What do you identify as the most important aspect in identifying a student for gifted programming? • What do you identify as the greatest challenges in meeting the needs of the advanced learners in your classroom? • Talk about how you differentiate instruction for the advanced learners in your classroom. • Additional follow up questions.
Principal	• Talk about parent satisfaction and involvement at your site. • What are you looking for as you observe in classrooms? • When initially implementing the RtI framework, how did you "sell" the staff as to its merits? • How has the PST process changed conversations among staff at your site? • How does the PST process differ for high ability learners versus struggling learners? • Describe the greatest challenges in using this process to identify the needs of advanced learners? • What do you identify as the greatest promise in using PST data to serve the needs of advanced learners? • What is your greatest celebration as the leader of this school?
PST	• How has the PST process changed conversations among staff at your site? • How does the PST process differ for high ability learners versus struggling learners? • Describe the greatest challenges in using this process to identify the needs of advanced learners? • What do you identify as the greatest promise in using PST data to serve the needs of advanced learners?
Focus Group	• Talk about how the RtI framework has changed conversations about students at this school. • Describe how the staff at this school approaches meeting the needs of all learners. • How has the environment established by leadership guided the staff in moving through the challenges of using this process to meet the needs of high potential learners • Talk about how the collaborative nature of this staff allows for the process to be strength-based and appropriate for meeting the needs of high potential learners. • What additional thoughts and ideas do you want to be sure I capture?

Data Analysis Procedures

The main units of analysis in this study were observation and interview data. Forms used during classroom and problem-solving team observations and excerpts from recorded interviews of the teachers, principal, and a focus group documented best practices in implementing and using the RtI framework (Coleman & Hughes, 2009; Colorado Department of Education, 2008).

The data gathered were analyzed to determine global patterns and themes. Matrices capturing the emergent patterns and elements were designed to aggregate and analyze the collective data. Patterns in the use of common terminology, classroom practices, instructional strategies, and data to inform instruction were captured via observation and interview data matrices. Common terms were highlighted and elements of contrast or uniqueness were noted for further exploration.

Findings

While the findings of a single case study aren't generalizable, using the RtI framework to address the potential of all learners holds great promise. Several key factors emerged:

- leadership support,
- knowledge of the RtI framework,
- relationships and collaboration, and
- family and community partnerships.

The principal, problem-solving team (PST) members, teachers, and focus group participants provided insights into the school's effective use of the RtI framework. Their depiction of the day-to-day realities in meeting the needs of all learners provided rich details as to why this site has been so successful in implementing and using the framework to support the needs of a full continuum of students.

Leadership

It was clear in the case of this successful school that an administrator's philosophy promoting collaborative problem solving is essential to the RtI framework. Staff members were empowered to share in decisions that affected their ability to serve the learners effectively throughout the school. Further evidence of the importance of administrators for effective implementation was a focus on structure and process. The school's meeting schedule was adjusted to provide time for teams to meet weekly and for the PST to meet three or four times per month.

With support from the principal and the leadership team, classroom teachers held high expectations for all learners, from those who struggled to those who were most advanced. Rather than cutting programming and services for gifted learners, the principal put the personnel, structures, and support in place to enhance them.

Clearly, the environment established by the building administrator guided the staff in moving through the challenges of using this process to meet the needs of high potential learners. In the words of the principal, "It (RtI) has really become that whole team approach to talking about what kids need. It's not based on any type of a label or any type of identification. RtI is everybody."

Knowledge of RtI Framework

Using a convergence of data to inform next steps for student success was a required practice established by the principal at the onset of the RtI implementation process. The team's ability to articulate how they use and interpret data was a clear indicator of their deep

knowledge of the RtI process, specifically with respect to progress monitoring. In terms of student engagement, staff used multiple data points, including knowing the strengths of the learner and adjusting instruction accordingly, as the means for tapping into potential.

While many examples were shared, this statement was representative of the collective responses of the participants, "We look at the individual child. We look at the students and their strengths, their needs–whatever that is – and we address those specific needs." The framework provided the PST with the structure for a data-driven, collaborative problem-solving process to discuss students' needs.

Relationships and Collaboration

Problem-solving team participants talked at length about the importance of relationships and collaboration. The principal and members of the leadership team felt the RtI process was predicated on effective collaboration among all staff.

Examples provided by respondents included an overall openness in sharing of strategies with grade level and PST members, willingness to seek out expertise and suggestions from the various specialists in the building, collaborative problem solving, and idea sharing at the PST meetings. The principal not only supported this process by providing dedicated time for collaborative dialog, but held the staff to high expectations regarding outcomes of the PST process.

The message from building leaders was clear: we discuss all students whose needs aren't being met. While the process did not hinge upon staff members "liking" one another, it was strengthened by a mutual respect for the expertise each member brought to the table, as well as a shared interest in ensuring the best possible outcomes for all learners.

Family and Community Partnerships

During the interview with the principal, the importance of a strong relationship with families and the community was emphasized; family and community involvement was cited as a core value. He spoke at length about the partnerships teachers build with families and the good will established by those relationships.

The partnership begins at the time of enrollment, forging a positive relationship from the onset. When parents express concerns about their child's progress, they learn about the RtI process, appropriate interventions, and programming opportunities provided based on their child's needs. The PST facilitator reported that parents were partners from the beginning of the process and were valued members of the collaborative team.

Recommendations

What do the results of this study mean for school administrators? How can we broaden our thinking to expand the way we use the RtI framework in our schools? The ultimate goal is to provide administrators, leadership teams, and school personnel the tools to more effectively meet the needs of all learners, including students who demonstrate high potential. Test scores alone do not provide the data necessary to inform teachers of needed changes in instructional practices.

In this case study I explored one school's processes in embedding the RtI framework school wide. The lessons learned may help school administrators consider ways to improve practices at schools with the essential RtI components in place.

Effective implementation at the study site was directly attributed to strong administrator support, a committed staff, and an understanding of the components of the RtI process. To ensure success within the RtI approach, it seems that unflagging commitment to ensuring growth for all students is non-negotiable.

The connection of professional development to fidelity of implementation, effective instruction and intervention, and ultimately positive student outcomes are important components, and are highlighted throughout the literature (Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements & Ball, 2007; Danielson, Doolittle, & Bradley, 2007; Shinn, 2007).

Ongoing, targeted professional development is required to ensure effective use of the framework as a potential-based model:

- recognizing potential in ethnically diverse and lower SES students;
- gaining knowledge of appropriate instructional strategies for use with high potential learners; and
- building a body of data to inform programming for high potential learners.

When school administrators provide professional development for teachers and support staff in these areas, unless the structures for collaboration are embedded in the school's schedule, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the practices will not prove to be sustainable (Kratochwill et al., 2007).

A shift in thinking is needed for school administrators, teachers, parents, and the community to nurture the potential of all learners by incorporating the RtI framework more broadly and giving all students what they need, when they need it. In most schools and districts RtI is, in practice, a deficit-based model used as a means for identifying students with a specific learning disability. At the study site the framework was not only used to identify and respond to the needs of struggling learners, but also to support teachers in providing high-potential learners with depth and complexity, monitoring the progress of the learner's response to more challenging work, and using multiple data points to inform next steps.

This process, supported through the tangible actions of school administrators, moves practitioners from a static identification process with an associated label or classification to a "potential-based model" that seeks and nurtures the potential in all learners. Programming is not predicated through identification for a specific program; rather, it is provided based on the student's strengths and needs. Certainly, the findings of this study alone, while promising, do not provide definitive conclusions regarding the utility of RtI framework in supporting a full continuum of learners; however, they provide a template from which to start.

Author Biography

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Research Article

The Influence of Teachers' Preexisting Notions about Students on Scholastic Achievement

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Abstract

This paper examines teachers' preexisting notion of the "weak" academic student, and the characteristics implicit in that stereotype. Extant literature demonstrates how the teacher's dichotomous conceptions of "strong" and "weak" academic students are predictive of scholastic success. The goal of this study was to demonstrate how teachers' implicit assumptions of students' scholastic failure become transformed into concrete attributions when the teachers are asked to explain students in a failure situation. Invited to complete a questionnaire assessing the potential causes of their students' scholastic failures were 370 teachers. Results show how teachers' conceptions of students as either "strong" or "weak" academically creates a "cognitive brake" on student scholastic achievement.

Key Words

teacher expectations, student achievement, student learning

Learning disabilities represent a category of various learning challenges that students can face during their school years (Landi, 1998). The term learning disability suggests cognitive problems that can potentially delay the acquisition of skills and knowledge (Vio & Tressoldi, 2007).

Together with socio-pathological problems (i.e., social factors impacting learning), learning disabilities are among the chief factors implicated in scholastic struggle and failure. Cornoldi (2007) emphasized how academic failure can be tied to factors that contribute to the development of students' negative self-image and a critical attitude towards school.

In this study I considered another factor, sometimes related to learning disabilities that can influence scholastic achievement: The conceptions that teachers have about their students' academic strengths and weaknesses and how those conceptions can influence student achievement. When a teacher views a student as a weak academic student, that view can influence the student's achievement in that teacher's class and sometimes beyond.

Literature

In a study about teachers' perceptions of students' excuses for academic difficulties (i.e., Tollefson, et al., 1991), 97 teachers described situations in which their students experienced academic difficulties. The students of the teachers provided reasons to explain their difficulties and the teachers indicated whether they believed the reasons students gave and what they thought were the real reasons for the students' difficulties.

The teachers also explained how they reacted and behaved toward the students. A qualitative analysis of the teachers' reports indicated that students were most likely to attribute their academic difficulties to external, uncontrollable factors, whereas teachers tended to believe that the "real" reasons for students' difficulties were internal and controllable by the student. That is, the students described an external locus of control whereas the teachers described the issue as being one related to internal locus of control.

Matteucci and Gosling (2004) studied French and Italian teachers and examined the influence of teachers' causal attribution of failure on the their judgments of responsibility compared to teachers who believed that failure was due to a lack of innate skills on the part of the student.

The results suggested that when teachers attributed failure to the lack of student "effort" they demonstrated a less positive view of the student than when they attributed failure due to the lack of innate skills or external factors outside the control of the student. The teachers continued to view the students in these ways throughout the school year regardless of changes in the students' academic achievement.

In a subsequent study, Matteucci et al. (2008), asked the teachers to rate unknown pupils, based on their grades and their answers given to a questionnaire regarding locus of control (i.e., internal (in terms of effort) and external).

Findings showed that students who gave "internal" answers in terms of effort had better grades, including the basis for a more optimistic future, and were rated higher by the teachers in the study. Teachers viewed students more favourably if the teachers believed the student responses indicate that the students were motivated to succeed.

Methodology

My goal for this study was to test the theory that teachers who have implicit notions about why students fail transform them into explicit and concrete notions when they are asked to provide a "*personalized picture*" of specific students in a scholastic failure situation.

Sample

The sample consisted of 370 teachers; 200 from elementary school and 170 from primary school. The majority of the teachers, 87.3% were women and 12.7% were men with an average age of the total sample of 43.66 (SD 8. 76).

The teachers who collaborated at the research teach in schools located Sicily, province of Catania, Italy, on the east coast of the island, near Mount Etna. The average years of teaching experience for the sample was 16.00 years ago (SD 9, 14). Elementary school teachers taught for an average of 14.50 years, whereas primary school teachers had an average of 19.59 (SD 9, 56) years of experience.

Data Collection

I asked the participants to complete two questionnaires. Prior to completing the questionnaires, participants attended a research presentation to learn more information about the purpose of the study and to receive answers to questions about the study.

I used two questionnaires that Rousvoal (1987) used in a study similar to mine (i.e., the relationship between teachers' representation of the "bad" student and scholastic integration and performance.). The survey items pertained to various causes of scholastic failure (e.g., psychological disturbances, programs unfit for the student, teaching methodology, etc.). The reliability estimates from Rousvoals' instrument were within acceptable limits. I conducted a factor analysis to test the reliability of my results.

The first questionnaire asked teachers to think about the concept of scholastic failure in general terms ("general failure"). The second questionnaire contained the same items, but asked teachers to specifically think about three recent students who failed their courses or failed the most recent marking period ("specific failure").

Both instruments contained 17 items and used a Likert-type response style, ranging from a value of zero (no influence on failure) to a value of four (determining influence on failure). I asked the participants to provide only one score for each item on the first questionnaire because they were to think about failure in general terms. Then I asked the participants to provide a response for each of their three specific students on every question on the second questionnaire; three responses per question

Data Analysis and Results

Preliminary factor analyses of the questionnaire on general failure

I performed a factor analysis to determine the internal validity of the questionnaires. For the first instrument ("general" failure), the analysis of the main components, with Varimax rotation, identified five factors that explained 14.99%, 13.18%, 12.94%, 12.45 %, and 9.57% of the total variance (63.13%) respectively (See Table 1).

Factor 1: The highest contributions were found to be related to variables:

(a) deprived cultural environment (.80),

(b) negative family atmosphere (.76),

(c) psycho-affective disorders (.71),
(d) behaviors disturbances (.59) and to a lesser extent,
(e) immaturity (.42).

The first factor portrays a student whose failure is originated from social cultural and affective factors. In this way, the student's difficulties are thought to be related to the family environment, which apart from creating a socio/cultural deficit, generates affective immaturity and behavior disturbances. This first factor was labeled "*affective/familiar deficit*" (.78).

Factor 2: The highest contributions were relative to the variables:
(a) father's profession (.91),
(b) mother's profession (.90), and
(c) material condition of life (socio-economic status) (.62).

This second factor depicts a student whose failure is related by the home environment as defined by the parents' profession together with low socio-economic status. This second factor was labeled "socio/economic deficit" (.79).

Factor 3: The highest contributions were relative to variables:
(a) lack of will (.85),
(b) lack of interest in school (.77), and
(c) intellectual deficiencies (.51).

This third factor is represented by internal factors related to the student's perceived lack of motivation, disinterest in scholastic life, unwillingness to study, and cognitive limitations. This third factor was labeled "motivational deficit" (.76).

Factor 4: The highest contributions were relative to variables:
(a) psychomotor delay (.81),
(b) physiological deficit (.80),
(c) language delay (.56), and
(d) cognitive impairments (.42).

This fourth factor refers to a student whose failure is due to some biological or genetic deficit, manifested by motor and language problems. This fourth factor was labeled "*bio/psychological deficit*" (.73).

Factor 5: The highest contributions were relative to:
(a) poorly adapted curricular programs or tracks (.73),
(b) structure of the school (.68), and
(c) teaching method (.54).

This fifth factor illustrates a student whose scholastic failure is related to the academic institution (e.g., poorly-adapted curriculum and/or programs, teaching methodology unsuited for certain students). This fifth factor was labeled "*scholastic institution deficit*" (.43).

Table 1

Five Factors Solution: Matrix of the Factorial Saturations after Varimax Rotation

	Explained Variance of the rotated components (absolute and percentage value)				
	1	2	3	4	5
	14.99	13.18	12.94	12.45	9.57
	2.54	2.24	2.20	2.11	1.62
Deprived cultural environment	.80	.18	-.00	.06	.04
Negative family atmosphere	.76	.16	.08	.17	.08
Psycho- affective disorders	.71	.05	.31	.18	.03
Behaviours disturbances	.59	-.03	.46	.20	.03
Father's profession	.05	.91	.02	-.01	.00
Mother's profession	.07	.90	.04	.05	.06
Socio-economic status	.29	.62	-.01	.11	.02
Lack of will	.13	.03	.85	.03	.16
Lack of interest in school	.16	-.02	.77	.21	.16
Intellectual deficiencies	.23	.15	.51	.42	-.03
Psychomotor delay	.11	-.04	.18	.81	-.02
Physiological deficit	.13	.11	.00	.80	.14
Language delay	.21	.06	.30	.56	.18
Inappropriate curriculum programs	.03	.05	.15	.06	.73
School structure	.03	.07	-.21	.35	.68
Teaching method	.04	-.05	.18	-.04	.54
Affective immaturity	.42	.29	.19	.05	.43

In a second factor analyses, the same factors were identified, but ordered differently based on teachers' responses about reasons for failure of specific students. The analysis explained 68.53% of the total variance (See Table 2).

Factor 1: The strongest contributions were:
(a) psycho-affective disorders (.80),
(b) behavior disturbances (.74),
(c) affective immaturity (.71), and
(d) negative family atmosphere.

I called this factor "affective/familiar deficit" (.79).

Factor 2: The strongest contributions were:
(a) cognitive impairments (.69) and language delay (.72),
(b) psychomotor delay (.79), and
(c) physiological deficit (.66).

This second factor (similarly to the fourth factor for general failure) was called bio/psychological deficit" (.81).

Factor 3: The strongest contributions were:
(a) father's profession (.84),
(b) mother's profession (.79),
(c) socio-economic status (.68), and
(d) deprived cultural environment (.50).

I called this factor "socio/economic deficit" (.76).

Factor 4: The strongest contributions were:
(a) poorly adapted curricular programs (.80),
(b) structure of the school (.78), and
(c) teaching method (.65).

This forth factor was called "scholastic institution deficit" (.76).

Factor 5: The strongest contributions were:
(a) lack of will (.99), and
(b) lack of interest in school (.90).

This fifth factor was called "*motivational deficit*" (.85).

Table 2

Five Factors (F) Solution - Matrix of the Factorial Saturations after Varimax Rotation

	Explained Variance of the rotated components (absolute and percentage value)				
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
	15.62	14.74	13.70	13.22	11.25
	2.65	2.50	2.33	2.24	1.91
Psycho- affective disorders	.80	.26	.08	.04	.07
Behaviours disturbances	.74	.26	.06	.12	.26
Affective immaturity	.71	.11	.16	.20	.05
Negative family atmosphere	.61	-.01	.31	.21	.23
Psychomotor delay	.18	.79	.00	.33	-.02
Language delay	.06	.72	.19	.29	.18
Intellectual deficiencies	.24	.69	.09	-.02	.15
Physiological deficit	.17	.66	.16	.43	-.08
Father's profession	.06	.00	.84	.03	.04
Mother's profession	.06	.14	.79	.08	.00
Socio-economic status	*.29*	*.13*	*.68*	*.10*	*-.03*
Deprived cultural environment	.43	.12	.50	.19	.21
Inappropriate ministerial programs	.22	.12	.08	.80	.14
School structure	.17	.22	.11	.77	-.09
Teaching method	.06	.36	.10	.65	.18
Lack of will	.19	.06	.03	-.00	.99
Lack of interest in school	.19	.10	.03	.14	.88

The analyses confirmed the reliability of the questionnaire, and the two factorial analyses indicated the presence of five factors for each questionnaire that the teachers used as reasons to explain scholastic failure.

Secondary Analysis

The first goal of the secondary analyses was to verify if the independent variables (i.e. school degree, years of teaching and type of school where the teachers worked) had an influence

over the scores obtained on the 17-item surveyed.

The findings indicated:

(a) Teachers with a university degree gave more importance to the "student's *lack of interest in school*" as a factor for school failure compared to teachers with only a high school diploma (high-school diploma: *M* 3.19, *SD* .19; university degree: *M* 3.36, *SD* .77; *t* .-2.87; *p*<.05); and

(b) Teachers with a university degree gave more importance to the "student's *lack of will*" as a factor for school failure compared to teachers with a high school diploma (high-school diploma: *M* 2.93, *SD* .92; university degree *M* 3.13, *SD* .83, *t* -2.14, p<.05).

The teachers with high school diploma gave more importance to the "student's *language delay*" as a factor for school failure compared to teachers with a university degree (high school diploma: *M* 1.87, *SD* 1.31; university degree: *M* 1.57, *SD* 1.23, t 2.19, p<.005). Similarly, teachers with a high school diploma gave more importance to the "student's *intellectual deficiencies*" as a factor for school failure compared to teachers with a university degree (high school diploma: m 2.60, *SD* 1.04; university degree: *M* 2.34, *SD* 1.08, *t* -1.88, *p*<.05).

I used an ANOVA to determine the influence that "*number of years teaching*" had on the respondents' answers to the survey. This analysis revealed that teachers with 30 or more years experience attributed failure more to the "student's *affective immaturity*" (*F*= 2.88, *p*<.05) whereas, those who have taught for 10 years or less give more value to the "student's *negative family atmosphere*" (F= 2.68, p<.05) and to the "*mother's profession*" (F= 2.90, p<.05) in terms of factors that contribute to student failure.

Furthermore, the results suggest teachers' attributions of the various causes of failure change when asked to explain the factors of failure for students they know personally compared to when teachers describe failing students in general. Teachers attribute failure to factors controlled by the student (i.e., laziness) when asked to explain general factors that lead to failure. However, they attribute factors that are more outside the control of the student (i.e. poverty, cognitive disability, lack of resources) when asked to explain cause of failure for specific students.

It is as if the teachers are less involved in the judgment process about failure when they are asked to describe the general factors that contribute to failure. They revert to established descriptions of student laziness, lack of motivation, or lack of drive to improve one's own situation.

The personalization of failure to specific students causes teachers to be more careful in giving an explanation for failure. The teacher finds himself in an uncomfortable situation because he must now think about specific students—*his* students. There is a change in the teacher's psychological perspective. When he must consider specific students, the teacher feels more compelled to be able to justify his evaluation that he makes of his students' performances, assuming in a way some part of the responsibility for that evaluation.

However, the teacher's attribution of the students' failures seems to become fixed. That is, once the teacher attributes specific factors of failure to specific students, the teacher

continues to view the student through the lens of those specific factors. This finding helps to explain why teachers continue to view and describe some students as "weak students."

Limitations

This study has some limitations that need to be considered in any attempt to generalize the findings and therefore further investigation is needed. First and foremost the sample should be expanded to a wider range of subjects: Sicily is the poorest province of Italy. It has the highest level of poverty and unemployment. It has a distinctive and peculiar culture, different from the north of the country.

Therefore the sample is not representative of the country. A further limitation of this study is of a methodological nature, regarding the limits of the survey instrument and quantitative methods in general. A qualitative method could better describe the various differences among unsuccessful students and paint a more personalized picture of failure.

A qualitative approach could better describe why a specific group of teachers choose the "motivational deficit" to describe student failure while another group chooses the socio/economic deficit. Qualitative methods could provide information about what teachers draw upon to formulate their own opinion? This type of investigation, to carry out using qualitative methods, could represent a further area of inquiry useful in making this process clearer leading to the formulation of the different characteristics involved.

Conclusions

First, the results of this study demonstrate that the teachers' degree status influences the beliefs communicated by teachers in this sample. In fact, teachers with a university degree who work in middle schools hold the belief that general scholastic failure is based on internal factors related to the student, such as student lack of will and loss of interest in school. Teachers with a high school diploma attribute general reasons for failure to uncontrollable internal student factors, such as cognitive disabilities or other issues outside the control of the student that influence learning.

This result is in line with past literature (e.g., Tetlock; 1980, Beckers, 1995; Kaszap, 1996) in that the most qualified teachers have a tendency to consider the student as being in control of his or her learning. On the other hand, with lesser levels of preparation, teachers might err on the side of attributing failure to uncontrollable factors due to issues related to their own professional status and sense of pedagogical mastery (e.g., uncertainties about making a scholastic impact with struggling students).

Results from previous studies (i.e., Bouchama, 2002) suggest that the teacher's experience in terms of years of teaching has no influence over the kind of attribution the teacher assumes for the failure of students. The results contradict previous finding because they suggest that teachers who have taught for only a few years attribute student failure to both internal and external causes, whereas those who have taught for many years attribute failure to factors controllable by the student such as motivation.

The results also suggest that the label of "*weak student,"* once attributed, becomes difficult to disassociate from the pupil. Medin and Ortony (1989) explain that this is due to *psychological essentialism*.

This confirms that the teachers do not tend to make decisions about the factors for

student failure based on data or information from the outside world. They rely more on an initial personal evaluation of a student. This reflects the principle of *cognitive economy*: individuals tend to not abandon their starting hypothesis after having formulated an opinion (Nisbett & Ross, 1989). Teachers tend to not update the information coming daily about the student. In many cases they continue to perpetuate the stereotypes of failing students.

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Book Review

College and Career Ready in the 21st Century: Making High School Matter

by James R. Stone, III and Morgan V. Lewis

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"Even your grandfather was better than a carpenter," Willy Loman lashes out at his son, Biff, near the end of the first act of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (p. 44). Through the character of Willy and his tragic fall, Miller illustrates the American obsession with prestigious careers and a condescending attitude toward manual work.

As I read *College and Career Ready in the 21st Century: Making High School Matter*, by James R. Stone, III and Morgan V. Lewis, I thought about the wisdom of Miller's 1949 classic and how it applies to contemporary education. There is tremendous danger in recognizing only one pathway to a life of satisfaction, purpose, and productivity.

Indeed, Stone and Lewis, two nationally regarded experts in career and technical education (CTE), argue convincingly that the "college-for-all mantra" (p. 30) and persistent calls for more rigorous academic standards in high school ignore the needs of more than half of our country's secondary-level students. "The real challenge facing high school education," the authors argue, "is not to increase the rigor of what is taught but to provide a more appropriate curriculum for those who find the typical academic class boring and frustrating" (p. 6).

Simply mandating more discipline-centered course work and standardizing the pathway through high school will only raise the likelihood that our disengaged students will drop out. It is worth noting here that almost 100 years ago, *The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* (US Department of Interior, 1918) recognized the same needs: a more diversified curriculum and opportunities for students to explore vocations.

Because higher academic standards and the testing and accountability regimes of the last three decades have not solved our dropout problem or raised our students' math and reading scores significantly, Stone and Lewis offer CTE as a promising way to engage many students and prepare them for employment and post-secondary education. The authors refer to several quantitative studies to demonstrate that, for students who are not engaged by traditional academic coursework, taking CTE courses—especially with a specific concentration or focus—has been associated with a higher likelihood of graduating from high school.

Furthermore, in several recent studies using regression models, CTE coursework has been shown to lead to higher wages in the world beyond school.

Stone and Lewis are careful to note that the quality of the CTE matters, and they focus much of their book on explaining what effective CTE looks like. For readers who are school administrators or CTE teachers, this is perhaps the most helpful part of the book.

Two important themes emerge clearly from descriptions of experimental studies: CTE teachers and academic teachers need time and systems to collaborate with each other, and CTE should not be considered a substitute for academics—rather, it should "maximize the academics" (p. 107).

Curricular integration, then, is the key to academically-enhanced CTE. After all, the landmark *Eight-Year Study*, (Aikin, 1942) launched by progressive educators in the 1930s, had already demonstrated the success of experimental pedagogical approaches that made high school course work more relevant and meaningful for a diverse array of students.

When curriculum is truly integrated, CTE offers opportunities to teach subjects like math, reading, and science in relevant and engaging contexts. Stone and Lewis report on several experimental studies and provide anecdotal accounts that demonstrate the efficacy of such instruction.

The studies and anecdotes began with professional development and/or collaborative design of lesson plans. In each example, the CTE teachers worked with academic teachers to identify the academic concepts inherent in their curricula and then learned how to teach those concepts within the context of occupational studies. Research-based reading strategies such as Forget's MAX teaching were used to enhance students' reading comprehension of dense passages from occupational texts like the *National Electrical Code.*

A carpentry class was enhanced by the addition of sophisticated mathematical concepts that appear on the ACT. CTE teachers in an agriculture program worked with chemistry teachers to approach the topic of pH and created an opportunity to teach the concept of ions and how logarithms might be applied. Crucially, in the authors' examples, the CTE teachers are the ones teaching the academics; they learn how to do so after working closely with their academic colleagues.

Furthermore, the benefits are bidirectional: CTE teachers raise the rigor of their programs by teaching academics in occupational contexts that match students' interests, and academic teachers who work with their CTE colleagues find new, relevant ways to teach core concepts in their own traditional courses.

Although the possibilities of CTE are inspiring, Stone and Lewis point out that American public education is grossly under-developed in its career counseling and fails to capitalize on more than 100 years of psychology scholarship, which substantiates the importance of career exploration during the adolescent years. In addition to more intensive career guidance, adequate funding is needed to support the kinds of reforms that the authors advocate.

Stone and Lewis review a list of impressive policy initiatives such as the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, but they show that the funding has never been enough to support lasting change. On a more local level, the authors claim that the current structure of school schedules and financing must be modified in order to create opportunities for the professional collaboration that is the *sine qua non* of academically-enhanced CTE.

Rich with data, Stone and Lewis's text is a bit dense and somewhat meandering in its middle chapters, but their descriptions of sophisticated experimental studies are framed by an argument that is bold and engaging overall—especially for educators who want to make high school more meaningful for the average student.

To the radical critics—the likes of Apple or Giroux—who would say that CTE is a form of tracking and only perpetuates class inequalities, the authors have an unapologetically pragmatic and compelling response: "This is a more just track than the one imposed by the default dropout track" (p. 165).

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Book Review

The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future

by Linda Darling-Hammond

Reviewed by:
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Linda Darling-Hammond's opinions are valued by some in the education policy-making community. She is one of the most influential spokespeople for more progressive education policy over the last decade. She lead President Obama's education transition team; her ideas at the time about how to move past the policies of No Child Left Behind could have helped to transform public education had only the administration listened. Her credentials include research and service on high profile task forces. She maintains connections with schools and states related to educational practices and policies addressing quality with equity.

This book opens on a familiar approach that the United States is falling behind other developed countries when it comes to educational achievements. At a time when "At least 70% of US jobs now require specialized knowledge and skills, as compared to only 5% at the dawn of the last century, when our current system of schooling was established." (p.2)

Furthermore, "… the new mission of schools is to prepare students to work at jobs that do not yet exist, creating ideas and solutions for products and problems that have not yet been identified, using technologies that have not yet been invented." (p. 2)

In the United States "… our college participation rates have slipped from 1st in the world to 16th and only about one-third of our young people receive a college degree." (p. 3) "At a time when high school dropouts are unlikely to be able to secure any job at all, our high school graduation rates—stuck at about 70%—have dropped from first in the world to the bottom half of individualized nations." (p. 3)

There are others who would contest these figures as well as other statistics, particularly the rankings of the US compared to other countries. For example, the percentage of young people who receive a college degree has never been much over "one-third" depending upon age definitions and whether associate degrees from two year colleges are included.

Likewise, international rankings are fraught with inherent problems and perceptions which are not resolved within this book. Americans are obsessed with rankings and "being #1", thus educational policy advocates utilize the numbers to draw attention to whatever they are promoting. A more universal

point is that many countries are making more educational gains at a faster pace than the US, regardless of rankings.

Meanwhile, globalization of economies, as explained by Tom Friedman in his book *The World is Flat*. is changing everything and quickly. Technology has reduced many barriers to education and the marketplace. Knowledge is no longer confined to privileged countries or people. Populations everywhere are taking advantage of new educational opportunities.

Darling-Hammond is no fan of standardized tests. Yet, ironically, like other researchers, she uses test data to make her case. "The results [on international tests of skills and knowledge] have been that the United States is standing still while more focused nations move rapidly ahead." (p.9)

United States 15 year olds ranked 21st in science and 25th in mathematics on the 2009 Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) out of the 30 member countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). When ten other countries from Eastern Europe and Asia are included, the US drops to 29th and 35th in science and math. It would have been prudent to point out the relative small populations of some of these countries and the minor differences between some of these rankings, although that would have reduced the attention-getting nature of the falling rankings of the US.

While the US has had "Stagnating Educational Attainment" (p. 14) overall the inequality between Asian and White students and African American and Hispanic students in the US is equal to the distance between the US and the highest scoring countries. Not as much notice is given to such academic gaps in other countries.

Educational policy when supported by funding can matter, while changing directions hinders progress. "Such U-turns in education policy and practice are not unusual in US education. Local, state and, sometimes, federal policies frequently force schools to change course based on political considerations rather than strong research about effective practices." (p. 14)

For example, the various improvements spurred by the Great Society's War on Poverty in the 1960's reduced funding inequalities so that "by the mid-1979's, urban schools spent as much as suburban schools, and paid their teachers as well; perennial teacher shortages had nearly ended; and gaps in educational attainment had closed substantially." (p.18)

However, "By the end of the 1980's, the achievement gap had begun to grow again." (p. 20) "The investments in the education of students of color that characterized the school desegregation and finance reforms of the 1960's and 1970's have never been fully re-established in the years since. Ironically, had the rate of progress achieved in the 1970's and early 1980's been continues, the achievement gap would have fully closed by the beginning of the 21st century." (p. 20)

A main point is "… whether investments in better teaching, curriculum, and schooling will follow the press for new standards or whether standards build upon a foundation of continued inequality in education will simply certify student failure with greater certainty and reduce access to future education and employment." (p.98)

The Texas "Miracle" (increased student test scores during the tenure of Governor Bush and Houston superintendent Rod Paige and others who later become President, Secretary of Education and various domestic advisors) is seen as a mirage as the system was gamed. "While elementary scores were boosted by holding low-achieving students out of the high-stakes tests, high school scores were boosted by the loss of low-achieving students for school entirely." (p. 84)

Another few pages devoted to "Massachusetts: The Untold Story" implies that dropout rates increase and more ninth graders fail to become tenth graders in "high schools receiving state awards for gains in 10th grade pass rates on the MCAS…" (p. 94) There have been documented cases of cheating in all states, thus there may have been particular reasons for selecting these two states to highlight since they both have been touted as making educational gains in states led by Republican governors.

There is a reference that "Teachers often attribute test score gains to test preparation rather than improved learning" (p. 72) and those scores can be raised without improving learning. What is left unaddressed is what is "improved learning" and how is it determined to be "improved." The offered answer is that the path to better learning is "investing" more funds. Yet, the critics can draw upon data to demonstrate that more funds have gone into education without a corresponding rise in test scores. Thus, it is not more money per se that would help, but targeted investing directed at some of the suggestions in this book.

The need for a long term view is conveyed with "Steady Work: How Countries Build Strong Teaching and Learning Systems." The countries reviewed are all high achieving on educational tests: Finland, South Korea and Singapore. All have leaped forward over the last 10 years with deliberate plans highlighting adequate and equitable funding, elimination of tracking, higher order skills, strong teacher preparation and ongoing professional learning programs. Of course, every country has a unique culture and demography, and unique policies and educational practices.

The tendency is to cherry-pick one's favorite existing traits as the cause for improvement. Most countries outside the US have a national educational system so anything that emanates from that characteristic could be cited as the reason for progress.

Darling-Hammond, like most educators, seems enamored with more funding, less tracking, curriculum standards, etc. Yet, the socioeconomic status of the individual families may be more responsible for educational outcomes than governmental spending. The elimination of tracking is still being implemented in these three countries (Finland, South Korea and Singapore) and may or may not have contributed to increased test scores. Teaching for mastery by all students may be more responsible.

Using examples from across the US, similar themes are presented along with alternatives to standardized tests or accountability based on professional judgment. Consequently, this book will appeal to many educators who are exasperated with this county's current system. They can pull information to support their frustrations.

The criticism comes easily to a researcher especially using international comparisons. There are many stimulating ideas in this piece, although there is no coherent

vision for a future educational system nor is there a blueprint for action. The author does acknowledge that romantic notions are not enough and that new designs need time, space and funding to prove they are worthy of going to scale. This latter point of establishing pilots may be this book's most enduring contribution, as the United States continues to struggle with drawing a coherent map for sustainable educational improvement.

Reviewer biography

Art Stellar has been a superintendent for 25 years. He has received AASA's "Leadership for Learning" and "Dr. Effie Jones Humanitarian" awards. He was elected president of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the North American Chapter of the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction and the Horace Mann League. He is presently consulting, writing and exploring career options. E-mail: artstellar@yahoo.com

The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future is written by Linda Darling-Hammond and published by Teachers College Press, NY, NY; 408 pages, softcover, $23.95.

Mission and Scope, Copyright, Privacy, Ethics, Upcoming Themes, Author Guidelines & Publication Timeline

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* is a refereed, blind-reviewed, quarterly journal with a focus on research and evidence-based practice that advance the profession of education administration.

Mission and Scope

The **mission** of the Journal is to provide peer-reviewed, user-friendly, and methodologically sound research that practicing school and district administrations can use to take action and that higher education faculty can use to prepare future school and district administrators. The Journal publishes accepted manuscripts in the following categories: (1) Evidence-based Practice, (2) Original Research, (3) Research-informed Commentary, and (4) Book Reviews.

The **scope** for submissions focus on the intersection of five factors of school and district administration: (a) administrators, (b) teachers, (c) students, (d) subject matter, and (e) settings. The Journal encourages submissions that focus on the intersection of factors a-e. The Journal discourages submissions that focus only on personal reflections and opinions.

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Upcoming Themes and Topics of Interest

Below are themes and areas of interest for the 2010-2012 publication cycles.

1. Governance, Funding, and Control of Public Education
2. Federal Education Policy and the Future of Public Education
3. Federal, State, and Local Governmental Relationships
4. Teacher Quality (e.g., hiring, assessment, evaluation, development, and compensation of teachers)
5. School Administrator Quality (e.g., hiring, preparation, assessment, evaluation, development, and compensation of principals and other school administrators)
6. Data and Information Systems (for both summative and formative evaluative purposes)
7. Charter Schools and Other Alternatives to Public Schools
8. Turning Around Low-Performing Schools and Districts
9. Large scale assessment policy and programs
10. Curriculum and instruction
11. School reform policies
12. Financial Issues

Submissions

Length of manuscripts should be as follows: Research and evidence-based practice articles between 1,800 and 3,800 words; commentaries between 1,600 and 3,800 words; book and media reviews between 400 and 800 words. Articles, commentaries, book and media reviews, citations and references are to follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, latest edition. Permission to use previously copyrighted materials is the responsibility of the author, not the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*.

Potential contributors should include in a cover sheet that contains (a) the title of the article, (b) contributor's name, (c) terminal degree, (d) academic rank, (e) department and affiliation (for inclusion on the title page and in the author note), (f) address, (g) telephone and fax numbers, and (h) e-mail address. Authors must also provide a 120-word abstract that conforms to APA style and a 40-word

biographical sketch. The contributor must indicate whether the submission is to be considered original research, evidence-based practice article, commentary, or book or media review. The type of submission must be indicated on the cover sheet in order to be considered. Articles are to be submitted to the editor by e-mail as an electronic attachment in Microsoft Word 2003 or 2007.

Book Review Guidelines

Book review guidelines should adhere to the author guidelines as found above. The format of the book review is to include the following:

- Full title of book
- Author
- City, state: publisher, year; page; price
- Name and affiliation of reviewer
- Contact information for reviewer: address, country, zip or postal code, e-mail address, telephone and fax
- Date of submission

Additional Information and Publication Timeline

Contributors will be notified of editorial board decisions within eight weeks of receipt of papers at the editorial office. Articles to be returned must be accompanied by a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope.

The *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* reserves the right to make minor editorial changes without seeking approval from contributors.

Materials published in the *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice* do not constitute endorsement of the content or conclusions presented.

The Journal is listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals, and Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities. Articles are also archived in the ERIC collection.

Publication Schedule:

Issue	Deadline to Submit Articles	Notification to Authors of Editorial Review Board Decisions	To AASA for Formatting and Editing	Issue Available on AASA website
Spring	October 1	January 1	February 15	April 1
Summer	February 1	April 1	May 15	July1
Fall	May 1	July 1	August 15	October 1
Winter	August 1	October 1	November 15	January 15

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AASA Resources

- ***The American School Superintendent: 2010 Decennial Study*** was released December 8, 2010 by the American Association of School Administrators. The work is one in a series of similar studies conducted every 10 years since 1923 and provides a national perspective about the roles and responsibilities of contemporary district superintendents. "A must-read study for every superintendent and aspiring system leader ..." — Dan Domenech, AASA executive director. See www.rowmaneducation.com/Catalog/MultiAASA.shtml

- ***A School District Budget Toolkit.*** In an AASA survey, members asked for budget help in these tough economic times. *A School District Budget Toolkit* provides examples of best practices in reducing expenditures, ideas for creating a transparent budget process, wisdom on budget presentation, and suggestions for garnering and maintaining public support for the district's budget. It contains real-life examples of how districts large and small have managed to navigate rough financial waters and offers encouragement to anyone currently stuck in the rapids. See www.aasa.org/BudgetToolkit-2010.aspx. [Note: This toolkit is available to AASA members only.]

- Learn about **AASA's books program** where new titles and special discounts are available to AASA members. The AASA publications catalog may be downloaded at www.aasa.org/books.aspx.

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Upcoming AASA Webinars and Events

Visit www.aasa.org/conferences.aspx for information.

- ✓ **AASA Legislative Advocacy Conference**, Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., July 17-19, 2012

- ✓ **AASA and ACSA Women in School Leadership Forum**, Hyatt Regency Newport Beach, Newport Beach, Calif., Sept. 27-28, 2012

- ✓ **AASA's 2013 National Conference on Education**, Los Angeles, Calif., Feb. 21-23, 2013 and **AASA's 2014 National Conference on Education**, Nashville, Tenn., Feb. 20-22, 2014