

BELIN-BLANK

Talent Search: Above Level Testing to “Prescribe” Programming

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- The Talent Search Model: **above-level testing**, which effectively identifies high-ability learners
- Above-level results:
 - “*diagnose*” academic needs and
 - “*prescribe*” the most appropriate programming
- Talent Search model emphasizes **aptitude and reasoning** beyond grade-level learning
- Guides districts in meeting the needs of the students in their programs
- Talent Search is under-used in most districts

What is a talent search?

- Goal: discover students who need further educational challenge to fully realize their academic potential.
- We do this through above-level testing: a test developed for older students is administered to younger students.

Excuses for **NOT** Identifying Talent

- Our elementary gifted program already covers the needs of *all* gifted children.
- We already have a gifted program.
- We have enrichment and it's "safe" – we don't need anything else.
- Teachers are already trained in differentiation.
- Having national standards guarantees a differentiated curriculum.
- Students are going to run out of classes to take.

Modified from Assouline & Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2011)

More Excuses

- Students aren't ready.
- Students will burn out before college.
- Accelerating learning leads to gaps in foundational skills.
- The pretest score wasn't 100% (or 90%), so the student does not need more.
- Students who make mistakes in basic skills don't need advanced programming.
- Too much time is spent in testing already – we shouldn't do more.

(Modified from Assouline & Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2011)

Even More

- District doesn't accept outside test results – nationally standardized grade-level tests only.
- We only use local tests developed by district.
- Policy against moving students up a level.
- Student has already skipped a grade – that's enough.
- Students can't properly be identified until high school.
- We don't really know what to do, so best approach is nothing.

(Modified from Assouline & Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2011)

Talent Search

- Julian Stanley: Diagnostic Testing → Prescriptive Instruction (DT→PI) Model in late 1960s
- Sanford Cohn:
 - 1981: Pilot tested search for younger students at Arizona State University
 - 1985: Brought concept to Center for the Advancement of Academically Talented Youth (later became Center for Talented Youth) at Johns Hopkins University
- Julian Stanley: Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth in late 1980s
- Susan Assouline & Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik: 1990s
 - SSAT-L administered to 3-5 graders
 - EXPLORE test administered in January 1993

(Assouline & Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2011)

How Does Talent Search “Work”?

- Uses *aptitude* tests instead of achievement or IQ
- Two steps:
 1. Initial screening: grade-level standardized test (e.g., ITBS or Iowa Assessment)
 - Students at certain level (e.g., 95-97th %ile or above) go on to step 2
 2. Above-level test
 - Ex. SAT-I, ACT, PLUS, EXPLORE
- Goal: Match students’ abilities, interests, and achievements with their educational program

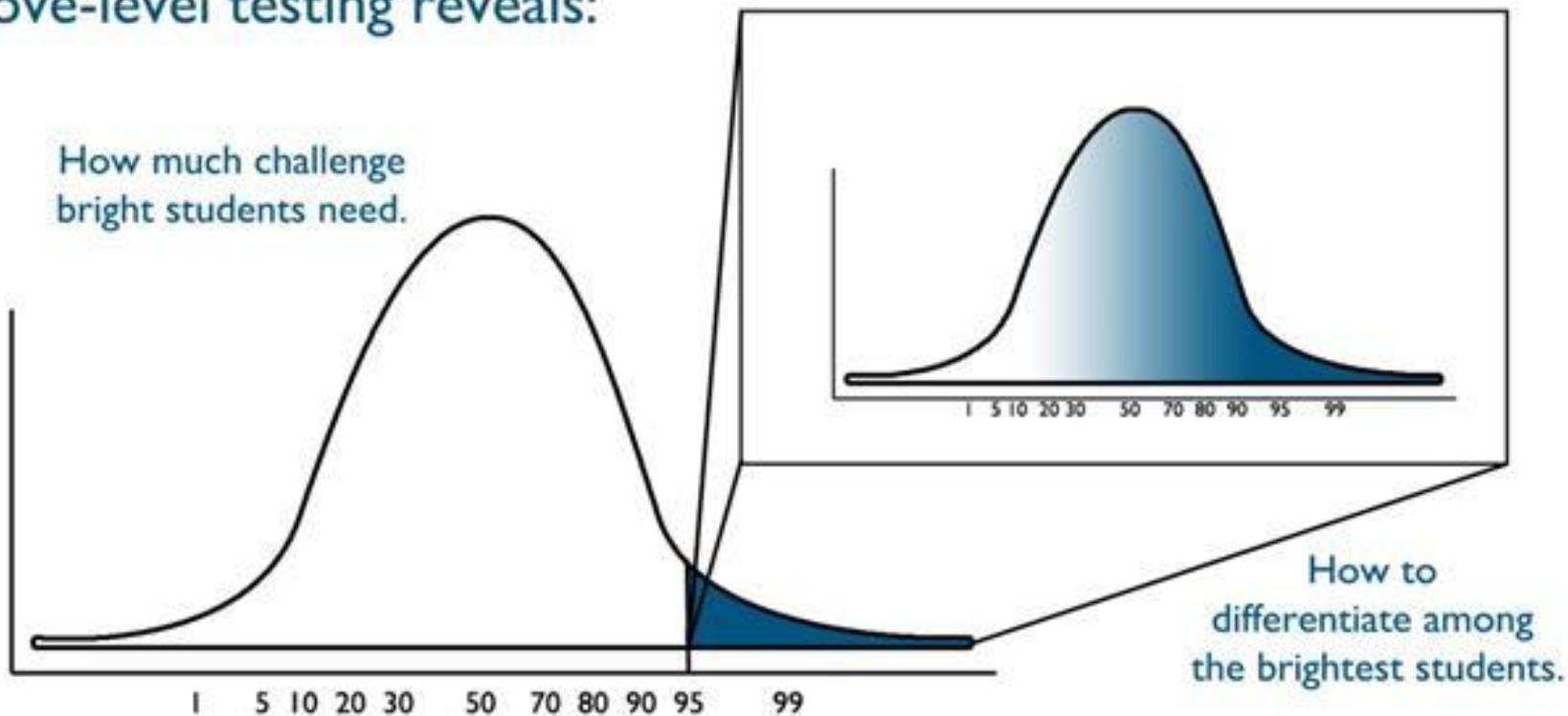
(Lupkoski-Shoplik et al., 2003)

Have your students “maxed out” the Iowa Assessments?

- Students scoring at the 95th percentile or above on any subtest of a standardized test have hit the ceiling of what that test can measure.
 - E.g., the Iowa Assessments
- How do you know what these students *actually* know?
- Better yet, how can you find out what they are ready to learn?

Above-level testing reveals:

How much challenge
bright students need.



Advantages of Talent Search

- Educational diagnosis
- Individualized educational recommendations
- More educational opportunities through university-based programs
- True peer group
- Appropriate educational information
- Honors, awards, scholarships
- Opportunities for educators

(Assouline & Lupkowski-Shopluk, 2011; Lupkoski-Shopluk et al., 2003)

One More Advantage

- It's fun! Many students find it to be an enjoyable challenge and a bit of a puzzle



Where do I sign up?

- 4th-6th graders take Explore, 7th-9th graders take ACT
- Traditional Model
 - Schools hand out fliers to students who qualify
 - Interested parents sign up, pay for the test, and receive results
 - Parents may share results with the school
 - \$65 per child
- For Explore (4th-6th grade) only - Arranged Testing
 - 1-3 students who are not near a testing location
 - Parents contact the Belin-Blank Center
 - \$78 per child

Where do I sign up?

- For Explore (4th-6th grade) only - In-School Testing
 - Groups of 4 or more students
 - An educator can set up a test date for anytime between October 1st and May 20th
 - Either the parent or school can pay for the test
 - School receives all results, plus an aggregate report for the group
 - \$45 per child, and free through a grant for Iowa 6th graders

In-School Testing

- Choose a test date between 4-6 weeks from now and May 20th
- Send a registration link to the parents, who can register until 3 weeks before the date
- Two weeks before the date, you receive the testing materials and, if applicable, an invoice
- Administer the test, and return all materials
- Roughly 6 weeks later, you receive:
 - Official ACT score reports
 - Individualized Interpretation Guides
 - Aggregate report for the group

belinblank.org/inschooltesting

In-School Testing: The Assessments

- Above-level testing (Explore®), \$45 (for 2014-2015 school year, 6th graders in Iowa may test at no cost)
- Psychosocial assessment (Engage®), free for a limited time
- Math-specific assessment (IAAT™/IARA), \$15
- Math-specific recommendations (IDEAL Solutions® for STEM Acceleration), \$25

belinblank.org/inschooltesting

Too busy?

- Your students can still benefit from above-level testing.
- Request free fliers through our Materials Request Form: **belinblank.org/matrequest**
- Mark your calendars – before September 15th, you can request a list of qualifying students straight from ITP.
- After September 15th, you can request the number of fliers you would like.

References

- Assouline, S. G. & Lupkowski-Shoplik, A. (2011). *Developing math talent: A comprehensive guide to math education for gifted students in elementary and middle school* (2nd ed.). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, Inc.
- Lupkowski-Shoplik, A., Benbow, C. P., Assouline, S. G., & Brody, L. E. (2003). Talent searches: Meeting the needs of academically talented youth. In N. Colangelo & G. A. Davis (Eds.), *Handbook of Gifted Education* (3rd ed.; pp. 204-218). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.