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## The Jewish gifted child: Family and educational considerations

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## The Jewish gifted child: Family and educational considerations

### Abstract

Through a review of the literature, this study examined two areas of Jewish life which affect the development of giftedness: family values and evidence of educational excellence. The Renzulli Triad, a model of gifted education, was then examined as to the extent to which it would match and meet the specific needs of Jewish children as identified in the literature. From this study it can be concluded that cultural groups with strong family values can influence the talent development of their children.

**THE JEWISH GIFTED CHILD:  
FAMILY AND EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**A Graduate Review  
Submitted to the  
Division of Education for the Gifted  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Education  
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**by Gail E. Kenkel**

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**This review by: Gail E. Kenkel**

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## ABSTRACT

Through a review of the literature, this study examined two areas of Jewish life which affect the development of giftedness: family values and evidence of educational excellence. The Renzulli Triad, a model of gifted education, was then examined as to the extent to which it would match and meet the specific needs of Jewish children as identified in the literature. From this study it can be concluded that cultural groups with strong family values can influence the talent development of their children.

THE JEWISH GIFTED CHILD:  
FAMILY AND EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Recently much has been published about meeting the needs of the culturally diverse gifted including identification processes and programming. Articles have been written concerning African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, American Indians, and Asian Americans, but little has been published concerning Jewish gifted students. Upon my investigation of the subject, several reasons for this omission became apparent. First, one cannot identify a student in the public school according to religious affiliation, so no studies could be performed in the public arena. Second, gifted programs at private Jewish day schools have not appeared to generate any research on Jewish gifted students. Third, as Gerald Lesser (1976) has warned, the political climate and the likelihood of

misuse of the data to support racist causes warrant a self-imposed censorship.

Why study Jewish gifted students? Lesser (1976) pointed out that people who share a common cultural background will also share, to a certain extent, common patterns of intellectual abilities, thinking styles, and interests. In an earlier study, he cited educational research indicating that teachers must make both immediate and continuing educational decisions about children from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds in order to provide effective classroom instruction (Lesser, 1964). Therefore, it would seem to be to every teacher's advantage to become more knowledgeable about the diversity of students within the classroom, including those who are Jewish. In order to understand an individual child's mental abilities, we need to know how children of a particular background tend to express their intellectual abilities in contrast to the rest of the school population. Furthermore, once this information is established, it is wise to determine which specific curriculum models of gifted education effectively serve this cultural group.



### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to review the literature related to the Jewish family, including both values and educational profiles, and, after an examination of the various facets of Jewish life, to ascertain to what degree a frequently used curricular model matches and effectively meets the special needs of this particular ethnic group. To achieve these purposes, the following questions were addressed:

1. According to the literature, what are the family values in the Jewish home, and what is their relationship to their children's achievements?

2. What does the literature show to be the educational profile of the Jewish student in relationship to outstanding academic and artistic achievement?

3. How does Joseph Renzulli's Enrichment Triad, a frequently used curriculum model for gifted and talented students, match and meet the specific needs of Jewish gifted children as identified in the literature?

### Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in relationship to this study:

Ethnic Group--those individuals who share a sense of group identification, a common set of values, behavior patterns, and other cultural and physical characteristics such as color and facial features (Baldwin, 1991).

Gifted--This paper uses the definition of gifted and talented as stated in Public Law 95-561 (1978): For the purpose of this paper, the term gifted and talented children means children and, whenever applicable, youth, who are identified at the preschool, elementary or secondary level as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performance or capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, specific academic, or leadership ability, or in the performing and visual arts, and who by reason thereof require service or activities not ordinarily provided by the school.

## CHAPTER II

## METHODOLOGY

In order to answer the questions posed by this study, I initiated and carried out the methodology as presented in this chapter. That methodology included two major procedures: (1) a review of the literature on the topic of Jewish gifted children and (2) an application of that reviewed literature to a frequently used curriculum model for gifted and talented children for the purpose of examining its effectiveness in matching and meeting the specific needs of Jewish children as identified by the literature review.

The available literature on the topic of Jewish gifted and talented children was very limited in quantity and in recency. I found few examples of longitudinal research replications on these topics. Current information on the Jewish family was also very difficult to obtain. My literature search, encompassing the years 1960 to 1995, yielded only 18 articles, books, or chapter books dealing with these topics. Two published sources were copyrighted between 1960 to 1969, three between 1970 to 1979, nine between 1980 to 1989, and two in 1990.

All available books and articles in periodicals were obtained through libraries at the University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa, University of Nebraska at Omaha, and the Jewish Federation Library in Omaha, as well as through the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). These sources yielded 16 published works.

In an effort to discover additional resources to those available in libraries and through ERIC, I established an extensive network from sources in Omaha that, in turn, referred me to sources in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles: population areas with concentrated numbers of Jewish families. Personal contacts by letter or telephone were made for the purpose of accessing possible sources for further information. These included the following individuals and organizations: (a) Sara Shapiro, Bureau of Jewish Education, Chicago; (b) Jewish Theological Seminary, Department of Jewish Education, New York City; (d) Rabbi Marty Schloss, Special Education Department, Bureau of Jewish Education, New York City; (e) Mel Isaacs, Yeshiva University, New York City; (f)

Department of Education, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York City; (g) Dr. Leora Isaacs, Jewish Educational Service of North America, New York City; (h) Mimi Cohn, Solomon Schechter Day School, New York City; (i) Melton Center for Jewish Education, New York City; (j) Sarah Lee, Jewish Education, Reform Movement, Los Angeles; (k) Sam Josephson, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati; and (l) Dr. Richard Freund, Religion Department, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

From this network, I received information which provided additional data and resources. I was directed to the Jewish Federation Library in Omaha; I was provided with pamphlets, articles, and research; and I spoke with Jewish educators in the field who either gave limited information or referred me to others in the field who might be of help. Most importantly, I received great moral support from these individuals who were aware of the lack of research in this area.

This broad review of the literature led me to the establishment of two major strands which seemed to be central to the discussions of the life of the Jewish family and the lives of gifted Jewish children. The first of these strands was Jewish family values. The

second was the importance of education in Jewish family culture. These two aspects were subsequently extracted from the reviewed literature, analyzed, and organized into the first two major sections of the review.

Two aspects of gifted education generally provoke much discussion in the field: identification and differentiated curriculum. Thus, it was almost inevitable that as a teacher of the gifted and talented, my initial examination of the information gained from the review would lead me to ask some questions about the possible relationship between Jewish family values/education and currently used identification and curriculum practices. In other words, could a comparison of Jewish family values/education with a specific gifted education model demonstrate similarities and a tendency to meet the specific needs of Jewish gifted children as identified in the literature.

The Renzulli Enrichment Triad was selected as the curriculum model to be used in this study because I am the most familiar with it due to its adoption and use in my school district. The Triad theory has been tested in the classroom and has research available to

back its claim as an effective model for gifted education. In addition, originators of the model have developed guidelines for identification of students, created procedures for integrating gifted education into the curriculum, and formulated reliable assessments of student interests, as well as evaluation of student progress.

Using this information, I then applied the knowledge gained from the review of the literature to ascertain any perceived relationships among the model, Jewish family values, and the importance of education in Jewish culture, as well as observations as to how the Enrichment Triad especially meets the needs of Jewish gifted children. From the review and comparison, I reached conclusions concerning the study. I also was able to develop some recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents the review of the literature. It focuses on two areas of Jewish life: family values and evidence of educational excellence. It then uses that information to discover the extent to which the Renzulli Triad Model can meet the specific needs of Jewish gifted children as identified in the literature.

#### Jewish Family Values

The reviewed literature shows that Jewish family structure seems to be fairly strong and stable in comparison to other ethnic groups. One family profile indicated that the Jewish family has a higher marriage rate and lower divorce rate than other ethnic groups (London, 1989). Cherlin (1983) found that the small family size makes it easy for parents to invest heavily, both emotionally and spiritually, in a child's upbringing and education. Shapiro (1965) pointed out that, in proportion to the general population, Jews have a low percentage of alcoholism.

The literature also points out that both mother and father have important roles in shaping their



children's values. Shapiro's study (1965) showed that the typical Jewish mother has the responsibility of maintaining a stable home and educating the children. According to Bubis (1971), she also tends to be college educated and wants her children to achieve as well. Rosenthal (1970) indicated that the Jewish mother continues a long established pattern of intensity, caring, and striving. He also postulated that Jewish mothers form an emotional interaction that direct a child toward success and that they are the dynamic force that is needed to achieve significant things.

The reviewed literature indicates that the typical Jewish father is well educated, self employed, and hard working (Bubis, 1971). Shapiro (1965) identifies him as responsible for teaching his children and having them understand good moral values. Together, Jewish parents create a strong family unit based on love of the parents for the children and children for their parents (Kraemer, 1989).

London (1989) has pointed out that children observe and imitate that which is given value for them by cherished adults. Victor (1986) has indicated that

Jewish parents work tirelessly to direct a child's energies and talents toward constructive human values.

McGoldrick's research (1982) indicates that in child rearing, Jewish families pay close attention to the emotional and intellectual development of their children, readily taking them to consultations if their grades fall below an "A" or if there is any indication of emotional upset. He adds that, during adolescent years, Jews tend to be democratic and move toward new values readily, so they are receptive to their child's interests. McGoldrick further postulates that the importance of success in Jewish families may lead to parent-child struggles at this stage, making family conflict a product of high achievement orientation.

The literature also indicates that parents in Jewish families teach children by emphasizing explanation and rational persuasion as well as the liberal use of praise (Victor, 1986). In addition, they place a high value on those qualities of their children that are associated with autonomy and self-direction, qualities that are necessary in more highly rewarded prestigious occupations. They appear to be

most interested in enhancing students' upward social mobility (Cherlin, 1983).

In every society, religion is one of the ways in which values are maintained and perpetuated. Judaism, through religious laws, places great stress upon family obligations and relationships that keep the family strong (Shapiro, 1965).

Sulkes (1982) enumerated four factors to explain why Jewish families produce more achievers in our society. Those factors include: (a) they demonstrate the independence needed to leave home and make their way in life; (b) they prefer individual rather than collective credit for the work they accomplish; (c) they believe that a good life isn't due to fate but hard work and education; and (d) there is greater equality in the power structure between the mother and father in the Jewish family.

In conclusion, it is clear from the available literature that Jewish parents play a critical role in their children's emotional and intellectual development. Parents nurture their children toward successful adulthood by providing a strong, stable home

life, and they act as role models that demonstrate hard work, high moral standards, and lifelong learning.

#### Jews and Education

Learning and teaching are important to Jews, forming the basis for behavior and fulfillment. According to Cohen (1986), Jews invest in education to a greater extent than other immigrant groups. Rosenthal (1986) points out that Jews, per capita, attend high school and college more than their Christian counterparts, appear in Who's Who in America more than any other ethnic group, win the Nobel prize with frequency, and dominate the areas of art, literature, and science. He tells us that Jewish Nobel prize winners are, in fact, twenty-eight times greater than the rest of the world population and that they generally win in the areas of medicine and physics.

Arieti (1976) focuses on the fact that Jews also are recognized for their contributions to chemistry and literature. He proposes that the reason for these and other achievements by Jews could be one or several of these factors: (a) the importance of teaching children to read so they could study the Bible created a love for literacy, education, and higher forms of knowledge

in Jews; (b) studying the abstract ideas in Jewish religion, such as the Talmud, a collection of 63 books that contains the body of Jewish civil and canonical law derived by interpretation and expansion of the teachings of the Old Testament, made Jews well suited for other forms of abstract thinking, especially in mathematics and science; (c) the Jewish faith emphasizes man's ethical transformation and the uncertainty of what tomorrow will bring, thus leading Jews to emphasize becoming and not just being; and (d) Jews have placed a high value on scholarship and innovation, thus confirming Plato's statement that what is honored will be cultivated.

Rosenthal (1970) has found that Jews were the most highly educated of all ethnic or religious groups. He tells us that virtually all Jewish children attend and graduate from high school and that eighty-five to ninety percent attend college. London (1989) expands upon this finding when he identifies Jews as among the highest achieving groups in the United States in school, grades, scholarships, and college attendance.

Studies of gifted students and giftedness seem to include a high percentage of Jewish children. In

Terman and Oden's longitudinal studies of gifted children, ten percent of their samples were composed of Jews. According to Sulkes (1982), the theoretical reasons presented for this were vocational success, liberal political attitudes, a lower divorce rate, and a strong educational tradition. It should also be noted that, according to research records, the majority of Leta Stetter Hollingworth's (1916) longitudinal study of children with an IQ of 180 or above were Jews.

In another research project, Adler (1967) used a longitudinal study of gifted children in Ohio to conclude that 8.5 percent of gifted students were Jews, three times the expected level within the total population of approximately five million. He also found that a high proportion of the gifted in the current literature of that period were Jewish children. This search of the literature revealed no apparent replications of this study nor any indications that the proportion of the population has increased or decreased.

Gerald Lesser (1964) did comparative studies of first grade children from four culture groups in New York City: Puerto Rican, Black, Chinese, and Jewish.

Using the revised and adapted Hunter Aptitude Scales, it was found that Jews excelled in verbal ability and numerical ability and were weakest in visual-spatial ability. The significant implication here is that the identification of relative strengths and weaknesses of members of different culture groups is a basic prerequisite to making enlightened decisions concerning curriculum and instruction.

In summary, the reviewed literature seems to indicate that Jews place a high value on higher education as a means for achieving personal fulfillment and success. They are the most highly educated of all ethnic or religious groups. Many Jews achieve recognition through nomination to Who's Who in America; and, in comparison to other ethnic groups, a high percentage of them are honored as Nobel Prize winners. Studies show Jewish children excel in verbal skills, numerical skills, science, and physics.

The Renzulli Schoolwide Enrichment Model:

A Curriculum Model for Jewish Gifted Children

The reviewed literature indicates that Jewish gifted children show a high degree of dedication to the educational process. They demonstrate task commitment

and autonomy (Cherlin, 1983). Sulkes (1982) indicates that the Jewish family realizes the importance of a good education and will do everything in their power to see that their children get every educational advantage possible. Therefore, any curriculum for the gifted and talented that will enrich and advance the intellect of their children would be strongly supported by Jewish families.

On the basis of this assessment, I have elected to apply the reviewed literature concerning Jewish family and educational values to Joseph Renzulli's frequently used curriculum model, The Enrichment Triad, for the purpose of determining its ability to match and meet effectively the special needs of Jewish children. This model of gifted education is organized to enrich children to the fullest extent because it encourages teachers to design a curriculum to meet the individual needs of their students.

#### Identification Processes

Renzulli (1991) believes that gifted students possess three interlocking clusters of traits, which he calls the "three-ring conception" of giftedness. They are: (a) above average, though not necessarily superior



general ability; (b) task commitment; and (c) creativity.

Above average intelligence.

The initial target audience for services is children who display or have potential to display above-average ability in one or more academic areas, or who demonstrate special aptitudes in areas such as music, drama, leadership, or interpersonal skills. These children form the talent pool that serves as the major focus for enrichment and acceleration programs carried out in self-contained or pullout programs. Curriculum compacting also is recommended as part of the services offered to talent pool students. The other two rings of giftedness, task commitment and creativity, can be developed through opportunities, resources, and encouragement provided in the program for above average ability students (Renzulli, 1991). Students who display above average ability, the first of the clusters, form the talent pool. They are identified for this service in the following ways:

1. They score at or above the 92nd percentile on any single test or subtest.

2. Teachers nominate students using forms and rating scales developed by Renzulli.

3. Students are nominated through alternative pathways which include parent nominations, peer nominations, creativity tests, self-nominations, product evaluations, or any other procedure that could lead to consideration by a screening committee. A case study including an examination of previous school records, student, teacher, and parent interviews can also be included.

4. Special nominations involve a circulating list of all students who have been nominated for talent pool in the past both within the current building or in other buildings within the school system. Previous-year teachers can nominate students not recommended by present-year teachers.

5. Parents are notified that their children are in the talent pool for the year, and a full explanation of the program comes with the letter (Renzulli, 1991).

Jewish students would certainly be among the qualifying students in this program with above average intelligence as the criteria. London (1989) reported that Jews were among the highest achieving of groups in

the United States in school grades, scholarships, and college attendance. Adler (1967) stated that the highest ranking in terms of gifted were the Jewish, German, English, and Scottish children. He also noted that Terman and Oden's sample population included a high number of Jewish children in their longitudinal study of gifted children done from 1920 to 1960. Their research noted that over 10% of the sample was Jewish, far more than population incidence would indicate.

Task commitment.

Task commitment, the second part of the triad, requires a child to become involved in a problem area for an extended period of time, requiring persistence in the accomplishment of goals, integration toward goals, the drive to achieve, enthusiasm, determination, and industry. These characteristics are observed when a child chooses a topic that interests him/her, not a teacher designed task (Maker, 1982).

Again, the literature would seem to indicate that Jewish children possess task commitment, thus making the Renzulli model especially appropriate for meeting their needs. Cherlin (1983) described Jewish children as highly encouraged by their parents to achieve

autonomy and self-direction. These traits, he stated, serve them well as adults in prestigious occupations that give them elevated social status. Victor (1986) stated that parents direct their children's energies and talents toward constructive human values. He also noted that parents are receptive to their child's interests. Therefore, the task commitment factor in the Schoolwide Enrichment Model would seem to be present in Jewish families.

#### Creativity.

Creativity, the last of the three clusters, includes originality of thinking and freshness of approaches, ingenuity, and ability to set aside established conventions and procedures when appropriate (Maker, 1982).

Arieti (1986) cited several instances of creativity among Jews. They included the high number of Jewish Nobel prize winners, the study of abstract ideas in the Jewish faith allowing Jews to be well suited to abstract ideas in math and science, and the high value placed on scholarship and innovation.

## Curriculum

The suggested curriculum program development for the Renzulli model is child-centered; gifted students are responsible for their own curriculum through contracts with a facilitator who assesses their interest, ability, and maturity factors. Independent investigation of real life problems proceeds with guidance from the teacher as needed (VanTassel-Baska, 1992). The Enrichment Triad has three different types of curriculum: Type I, General Exploratory Activities; Type II, Group Training Activities; and Type III, Individual and Small Group Investigations of Real Life Problems. The first two types are appropriate for all learners, as well as gifted students, since they deal with strategies for expanding student interests and developing cognitive and affective interests. Type I and II experiences set the stage for Type III enrichment activities, which is appropriate for gifted students (Maker, 1982).

### Type I activities.

Type I enrichment activities are general exploratory experiences that give students opportunities to generate new interests. Examples

include interest centers, visitations or field trips, and resource persons or guest speakers. Visitations should include places where students can actively engage in the learning process, such as children's museums or science centers as well as work environments where students can see and interact with professionals in their field of expertise. Guest speakers should be those who are continuing to learn and grow within their field, such as artists, authors, scientists, and photographers. As a student continues through Type I experiences, the teacher assesses present and potential interests by giving an interest inventory. Renzulli has one such instrument called an Interest-A-Lyzer, a series of hypothetical situations in which the student is responding to open-ended questions. General patterns of interest are noted. The student can modify or change answers whenever warranted (Maker, 1982). Jewish children may have experienced many Type I activities in their home environments since the small family size makes it easier for parents to invest in their child's upbringing and education (Cherlin, 1983). McGoldrick (1982) states that Jewish parents are very receptive to their child's interests, also indicating

that they tend to expose their children to activities similar to Type I experiences based on what their children like to do.

Mentors can also be a by-product of a Type I experience. If a child finds an area about which he/she is passionate, parents and teacher can explore the use of a mentor (Maker, 1982). Because Jewish children display a high degree of autonomy and self-direction (Cherlin, 1983), the use of a mentor, as suggested by the Renzulli Model, can add to the child's knowledge base. The mentor can act as the child's advisor, consultant, specialist, and sometimes critic until his/her own goals and objectives have been achieved.

#### Type II activities.

Type II enrichment experiences allow development of thinking and feeling processes that will help students deal more effectively with content. These process skills and abilities will enable students to solve problems in a variety of areas that will be encountered during a Type III investigation. Examples of process skills are brainstorming, observation, classification, interpretation, analysis, evaluation,

comparison, categorization, synthesis, fluency, flexibility, flexibility, originality, elaboration, hypothesizing, awareness, appreciation, value clarification, and commitment (Renzulli, 1991). These process skills can be taught to all students who qualify for the enrichment program.

Jewish students would be especially receptive to Type II activities since parents place great emphasis on their children's education (Cohen, 1986). Jewish children are encouraged by their parents to develop both emotionally and intellectually (McGoldrick, 1982), so they would actively engage in the thinking and feeling processes taught to them through Type II activities.

#### Type III activities.

Type III enrichment includes individual and small group investigations of real and solvable problems that end with a tangible product that is presented to a real audience. Examples include writing a play, publishing a book, writing a brochure, producing a television arts company, and developing a new theory. Students revise, edit, and polish their products before ending their type III experience. Students must have advanced



library skills and know how to use multiple types of reference materials (Maker, 1982).

According to Cherlin (1983), Jewish parents encourage their students to be self-directed and independent, qualities needed for Type III investigations of real life problems. Arieti (1986) found that Jews place a high value on innovation, a trait which also is very important in the development of the Type III product.

In addition to participating in general enrichment experiences, teachers can compact the regular curricular program of talent pool students in those content areas in which they excel. In this compacting process, a student's work that he/she has already mastered can be eliminated, and work that can be easily mastered can be streamlined. Reasons for such compacting are (a) to create a more challenging learning environment, (b) to guarantee proficiency in the basic curriculum, and (c) to buy time for more appropriate enrichment and/or acceleration activities. Renzulli (1991) has developed an individual educational programming guide called The Compactor that details how the child has proved that the skills within the

strength area have been mastered and then suggests possible acceleration activities that will provide advanced learning experiences.

Brown (1983) has presented a view that gifted Jews need a highly specialized program that promotes intellectual curiosity, original thinking, motivation, and the desire to gain further knowledge. It would appear that the use of the compacting strategy can provide individualization of each Jewish student's education and ensure that new learning will take place at an appropriate pace.

CHAPTER III  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to review the literature related to the Jewish family, particularly the family and educational values, and then to ascertain to what degree a frequently used curricular model of gifted education matches with and effectively meets the needs of this particular ethnic group. To achieve these purposes, three questions were addressed.

First of all, what family values are displayed in the Jewish home? From the few studies available, the following picture of the Jewish family emerges: Jewish parents play a critical role in their child's emotional and intellectual development. Parents nurture their children toward successful adulthood by providing a strong, stable home life, and they act as role models that demonstrate hard work, high moral standards, and lifelong learning. In addition, the family clearly knows the value of a good education as a vehicle for their children to become successful adults (Adler, 1967; Bubis, 1971; London, 1989; Sherwin, 1992). Thus, it would appear that motivation or, as Joseph Renzulli

calls it, task commitment, is frequently evidenced in this ethnic group. Above-average ability, the identifying factor for Renzulli's talent pool, is an identified characteristic of Jewish children. Adler (1967) found that Jews were consistently mentioned in gifted groups in current literature in far greater numbers than would be expected in view of their total number in the population. One of the reasons for these accomplishments seems to be a strong cultural value system.

The second question was posed to identify from the literature an educational profile of the Jewish student from the viewpoint of academic and artistic excellence. The reviewed literature portrays the Jewish family as an achievement oriented, values-centered unit. Shapiro (1965) states that in every society, religion is one of the ways in which values are maintained and perpetuated. Judaism, through religious laws, puts great stress on family obligations and relationships that keep the family strong. The reviewed literature points to the fact that the small family size allows the parents to invest heavily, both emotionally and

spiritually, in a child's upbringing and education. It is also clear that the Jewish family wants to be a successful part of middle to upper class American life. To achieve this goal, Jewish families stress school, learning, and achievement (Sulkes, 1982). The family encourages autonomy and self-direction in its children. These traits are necessary in prestigious occupations that enhance students' upward social mobility (Cherlin, 1983). Parental encouragement and support is vital to educational excellence. Victor (1986) states that parents work tirelessly to direct a child's energies and talents toward constructive human values. Rosenthal (1970) reports that the Jewish mother drives the child toward success, and she is the dynamic force needed for the child to achieve significant things in his/her life.

The third question to be posed by this study was: How does the Renzulli Triad, a frequently used curriculum model for gifted and talented students, meet the specific needs of Jewish gifted students? Jewish students identified as gifted will be successful in this model for a variety of reasons. First, reviewed

literature emphasizes that they are encouraged by their families to do well scholastically. In all probability, they have been exposed to multiple learning experiences with their families, similar to the Type I general enrichment activities that Renzulli describes. Second, the autonomy and self-direction that Jewish children tend to display will enable them to independently research their investigation of real-life problems. No doubt, Jewish parents, in their support of high achievement in their children, will be likely to assist their children in research and reference skills needed to succeed in these experiences.

When a child finds a particular "passion area" that he/she wants to examine further, a mentor can help the student do a more in-depth study of that area of giftedness. The Jewish family would likely support such a study, and they would work with the teacher and mentor to make the study both meaningful and educational.

Jewish students are highly motivated and would be likely to work diligently to learn new material presented through curriculum compacting and

acceleration of subjects in which they excel. This is what Renzulli refers to as "task commitment," and it is the ability of a student to involve him or herself in a problem area for an extended period of time.

#### Conclusions

On the basis of this review of the literature, it is evident that identification of ethnic issues is important when considering appropriate educational programming for gifted students. One can conclude that cultural groups with strong family values can influence the talent development of their children. The reviewed literature revealed that Jewish parents consciously act as role models for high moral standards, hard work, and lifelong learning. They impose high educational standards for their children. One result of such strong family values is the recognition of Jews as the most highly educated of all ethnic or religious groups, with expectations that most of their children will go on to college after completion of high school.

A curriculum designed to challenge gifted students, such as Renzulli's Enrichment Triad, is

appropriate for this ethnic group because the model is tied to the school district's established curriculum, it has guidelines for identification of students, and it gives ways to assess and evaluate student progress.

#### Recommendations

Extensive research on the Jewish gifted student is needed if we are truly to understand this ethnic minority and meet the needs of their gifted children. If research cannot be accomplished within the confines of the public school due to the inability of school districts to identify students by religious affiliation, then research must begin with Jewish day schools in the major population centers where Jewish families live. Such cities would include Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York.

From this limited study, I concluded that the Renzulli Enrichment Triad would fit the needs of Jewish gifted students. Joseph Renzulli could design research to see how his Triad fits the needs of Jewish gifted students. Further research could be expanded to see how his curriculum model fits the needs of other specific ethnic minorities.



Finally, longitudinal studies similar to that of Terman are should be initiated. This is especially needed if we are to understand this ethnic minority group and to discover what holds constant and what changes with the times.

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