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The Good News About Academic Acceleration: Becoming *A Nation Empowered*

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Special interests:
Acceleration of gifted students, identifying and providing programs for mathematically talented students

Co-developer of *The Iowa Acceleration Scale – 3rd Ed* (2009)

Co-author, with Susan Assouline, Nicholas Colangelo, & Joyce VanTassel-Baska: *A Nation Empowered: Evidence Trumps the Excuses Holding Back America's Brightest Students*

Co-author (with Susan Assouline) of *Developing Math Talent: A Comprehensive Guide to Math Education for Gifted Students in Elementary and Middle School*

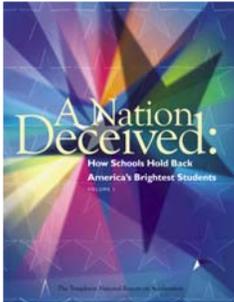
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Acceleration is the
best-researched, yet most
under-utilized educational
option available for
gifted students.

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The backstory: 2004



- The paradox:
Policy and practice were not aligned with research.
- Students with the greatest needs *least likely to receive the correct intervention.*
- Although well-intentioned, the *reasoning underlying this paradox is false.*
- The focus of *Nation Deceived* was to *start the conversation* and dispel the myths.
- Books are still available as a free download:
www.nationdeceived.org

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What are some myths about acceleration or excuses for not accelerating students?

Myths and Excuses

from Volume 1, *A Nation Deceived*

- Age trumps aptitude
- It's bad to push kids
- They will have trouble making friends



Thanks to Kimm Doherty and Linda Deal for assistance with graphics

Myths and Excuses

from Volume 1, *A Nation Deceived*



- It will lower the self-esteem of the student or of other students
- It's not fair to the other kids in a classroom
- This intervention runs counter to personal beliefs (concerns about equity, etc.)

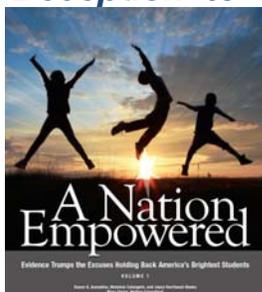
Myths and Excuses

from Volume 1, *A Nation Deceived*

- Teachers lack familiarity
- Confidence in the value of the intervention is low



From Deception to Empowerment



Evidence Trumps the Excuses Holding Back America's Brightest Students

Editors:
Susan G. Assouline,
Nicholas Colangelo,
Joyce VanTassel-Baska, &
Ann Lupkowski-Shoplak
Published April 2015

Discount: **EMPOWERED**
www.nationempowered.org

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Big picture: What can we learn from *A Nation Empowered*?

- **Acceleration works.** An extensive research base supports acceleration
- Methods have been developed to evaluate candidates for acceleration **systematically** and guide educators through the process
- Acceleration can be provided in many ways, including content acceleration, grade-skipping, and dual enrollment. Acceleration can be **tailored to individual students'** needs.

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What can we learn from *A Nation Empowered*? (Continued)

- Acceleration supports the **social/emotional** development of gifted students by placing them with other like-minded students
- Acceleration is an **inexpensive** option
- Acceleration supports the **continuous** academic **development** of students by providing academic challenges & stimulation
- **Resources** for making decisions are available in *Nation Empowered* and at www.accelerationinstitute.org

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The Five Dimensions of Acceleration

Dimension	Concerns
Pacing	Calibration, reporting, continuity of the process over the years
Saliency	Age of student, stage of schooling, type of acceleration
Peers	Knowledge of the acceleration by others, type of acceleration, group or individual, degree of acceleration
Access	Population centers, acceptability by schools, state policy, cost, availability of courses or programs, transportation
Timing	Age-related issues, during school vs. outside of traditional school time

What's an effect size?

$$\frac{M_{\text{experimental group gain}} - M_{\text{comparison group gain}}}{SD_{\text{pooled}}}$$

It allows us to compare the results of many different research studies in a standardized manner.

Interpretation:

- .20 = small/negligible
- .50 = medium
- .80 = large

Another interpretation:

An effect size of .30 would suggest the grade equivalent improvement in a given outcome for one group of about **three additional months** of achievement of the experimental group over the control group

Some interesting findings

Interpretation: 0.20 = small/negligible; 0.50 = medium; 0.80 = large
(All of these report academic effects)

Concurrent/dual enrollment	+ .41
Single subject acceleration	+ .42
Summer university courses	+ .43
AP courses	+ .60
Radical acceleration	+ .61
Grade skipping	+ .67
Accelerated/honors classes	+ .69
Computer/online courses	+ .72
Saturday classes on university campus (1 study)	+1.56

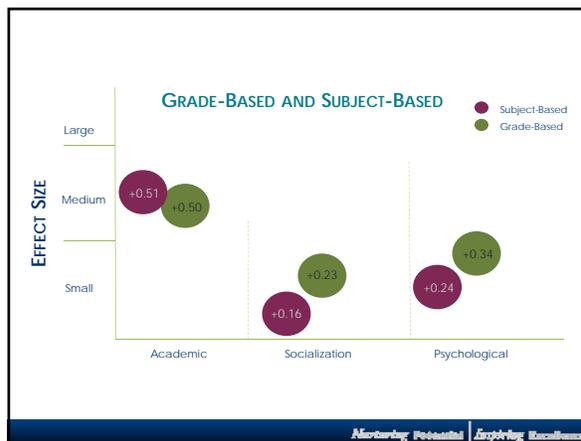
Effect Sizes (from Rogers chapter in *A Nation Empowered*)

	Subject-Based Acceleration	Grade-Based Acceleration
Summary Academic Effects (all grades)*	+0.51	+0.50
Summary Socialization Effects (all grades)**	+0.16	+0.23
Summary Psychological Effects (all grades)	+0.24	+0.34
*These students gained an additional...	5.1 months over comparison grp	5.0 months over comparison group

**See next slide for more about socialization effects

The Socialization Question

- “Socialization concerns” are usually the major reason we’re hesitant to accelerate
- Socialization/psychological effects are “negligible” or “small” (and in a positive direction). What does this mean?
- What are some ways in which we can refute the socialization argument against acceleration?



Alternatives have less support

- Enrichment (.20)
 - Pull-out Resource (.20)
 - Classroom Differentiation (.25)
 - Independent Projects
 - Cooperative Learning
 - Special-topic Projects
 - Field Trips
 - Competitions
- Some students' needs **can** be met by these approaches
 - **Anything that helps is a plus**
 - But, for high ability students **none of these approaches** has produced the compelling research evidence of acceleration.

Emerging trends in the past decade shaped *A Nation Empowered*

- Twice-exceptionality
- Core curriculum
- Diverse populations
- STEM
- Professional Development
- International impact
- Specialized schools, such as state residential STEM schools
- Early entrance to college
- Bridging the disconnect between in-school programming and out-of-school



Making Decisions about Whole-Grade Acceleration

- **Iowa Acceleration Scale**

- Developmental factors
- Interpersonal Skills
- Attitude & support of student, parent, school
- Critical issues for grade skipping (attitude of student, level of ability, grade level of siblings)



Content-Based Acceleration

- For students who:
 - Demonstrated academic ability in one or more academic areas
 - Are not recommended for whole-grade acceleration
- Benefits students with uneven academic profiles who need acceleration in the area of their strength
- May have already skipped a grade but need additional acceleration in extreme strength area

Resources provided by the Belin-Blank Center, Univ of Iowa

- Acceleration Institute (www.accelerationinstitute.org)
- In-School Testing (new online test, I-Excel, www.I-Excel.org)
- Talent Search using ACT and I-Excel
- IDEAL Solutions
- Online Advanced Placement courses plus other courses for middle school students (IOAPA)

www.accelerationinstitute.org



www.AccelerationInstitute.org

- Resources
 - Personal stories about acceleration
 - Acceleration practices and policies in **each state**
 - Relevant research on content acceleration
 - Nation Deceived (2004; free download)
 - **Nation Empowered**
 - Chapter on STEM Acceleration
 - Chapter on Content Acceleration/Common Core
 - Chapter on Talent Searches

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Guidelines for Developing an Academic Acceleration Policy

- Free download: http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/Resources/Policy_Guidelines/
- Developed by
 - the National Association for Gifted Children,
 - Belin-Blank Center, University of Iowa, and
 - Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted



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Professional Development

- An **online graduate course** on academic acceleration is offered through the University of Iowa College of Education. This 3-credit course is typically offered each fall.
 - www.belinblank.org/courses (Follow links to see the list of courses)
- See www.belinblank.org/webinar for a list of webinars that have been offered in gifted education
- Many other opportunities are also available for educators: www.belinblank.org/educators

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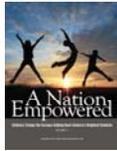
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- Located at the Belin-Blank Center, The University of Iowa
- www.belinblank.org/academy

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