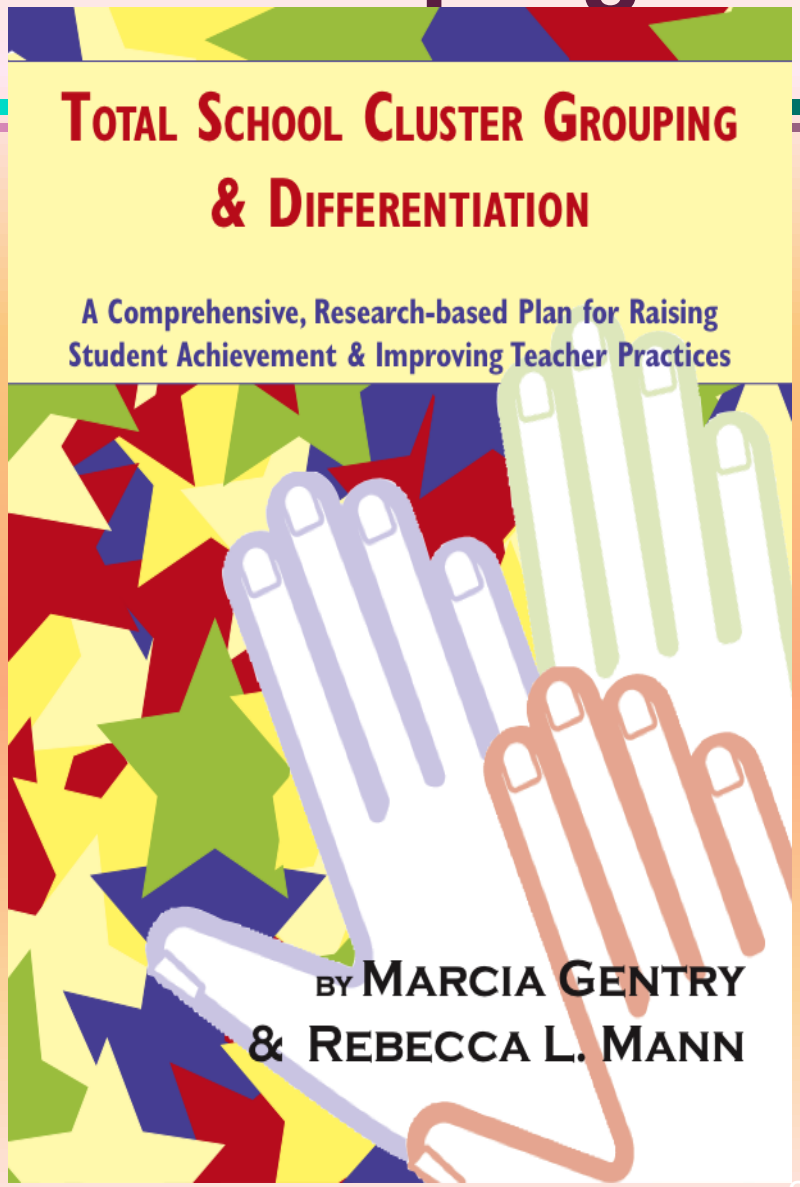
Total School Cluster Grouping

TSCG

A Model to Improve Student Achievement and Teacher Practices



TSCG Overview

- **Scientific & Research Based National Study**
- **Cluster Grouping with Differentiated Instruction**
- **Focused on meeting the needs of ALL students**
  Focuses on gifted education & talent development as the basis for all classrooms
- **Moves *away* from generic cluster grouping that focuses on Gifted students alone**

Project Goals

- To increase the number of students from underrepresented groups, who over time are identified as gifted;
- To increase student achievement in Math, Reading & Science;
- To improve teacher practices by helping teachers learn to use gifted strategies

Rationale for Cluster Grouping

- G/T students clustered with their intellectual peers, as well as with age peers
- Heterogeneity maintained
- Deliberate reduction in number and diversity of achievement groups for every teacher
- Removal of highest achievers allows other students to emerge as achievers

Rationale for Cluster Grouping

- **High achievers placed with teachers who have training, expertise, and desire to differentiate curriculum and instruction and to meet their needs**
- **High expectations maintained in all classrooms**
- **All staff benefit from professional development and methods used with the high achieving cluster**

Research-based Benefits of Cluster Grouping

- **Removing the high achievers from classrooms allows other student to emerge as achievers**
- **Student achievement increases when cluster grouping is used**
- **Over time fewer students are identified as low achievers and more students are identified as high achievers**
- **Reduces the range of student achievement levels that must be addressed by teachers in all classrooms**

Unique, Flexible, Student-Based Identification System

- High Achieving
- Above Average
- Average
- Low Average
- Low
- Special education

Definitions of ID Categories

High Achieving **students are great at both math and reading.**	*Average Achieving* **students achieve on grade level; they neither struggle nor do they excel.**
Above Average Achieving students are good at math and reading or are great at either math or reading.	*Low Average Achieving* students struggle slightly with reading and math, or they struggle with either reading or math.
Low Achieving students find school difficult, they struggle in all academic areas and are at risk of failure.	

Unique, Flexible, Student-Based Identification System

- Ever know a kid who is really bright but who doesn't test well and who, thus doesn't qualify?
- What about the kid who *can* but *won't?*
- Who generally knows the kids best, tests or teachers?
- Multiple labels allowed!
- Tests are used for means of *inclusion* only, not for *exclusion*

Sample Classroom Configuration

ID Category	4th grade Clsrm 1	4th grade Clsrm 2	4th grade Clsrm 3	4th grade Total grade
High-Achieving	6	0	0	6
Above-Average	0	7	6	13
Average	7	7	7	30
Low-Average	8	0	6	14
Low	0	8	0	8
Sp. Educ.	1*	0	3**	4
Total	**22**	**22**	**22**	**66**

*note. This student is twice-exceptional.

**note. These students see the same teacher consultant who also helps the classroom teacher.

Grouping Categories

Grouping categories:

- Group 1—Gifted: All gifted-identified students, including those who are not fluent in English, not productive in school, and twice-exceptional gifted students.
- Group 2—High Average: Highly competent and productive students who achieve well in school.
- Group 3—Average: Students achieving in the average range of grade-level standards.
- Group 4—Low Average: Average students who are able to achieve at grade level with some support.
- Group 5—Far Below Average: Students who struggle in several subject areas and score below proficiency levels on academic measures.

The cluster group of gifted students (Group 1) is placed in a classroom with the designated gifted cluster teacher for that grade level. High-achieving students (Group 2) are then evenly placed into the classes that do not have the gifted students. Students from Groups 3 and 4 are then placed into each class, and students in Group 5 are placed into all classes the except the gifted cluster class. With this placement method, no teacher has the full spectrum of abilities. Narrowing the range of achievement levels in every class allows teachers to focus their efforts more productively (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008).