I recently read an article about a school for special students. Spending for these students was two to four times the average for students attending 'regular' schools in that state. The school was operated as a residential school and the students had access to many programs that the students in less funded schools did not. The test scores for these special students were, for the most part, outstanding. The state was very proud of this school for special students. However, the school, which was to be one of several in the state, was very expensive to run and maintain. The state therefore decided that this school for special students would be the only one of its type that would be funded. How is it that this one school for special students received such funding and such attention? It turns out that the school is the Illinois Math and Science Academy and these special gifted students were selected after a very rigorous admissions process.

No one denies that students who can do well in math and science (or music or art) should be penalized for their abilities. Quite the contrary, these students should be encouraged to excel through their talents. But what about the students who have been placed in 'special education' classes. Are these students, too, not special?

Each state provides guidelines as to how students who fall within their definitions of 'special education' should be assisted. However, these guidelines are often bureaucratic in tone (as is generally required when developing guidelines). The articles in this section of the Technology and Teacher Education Annual provide a varied and humanizing look at both the students and the educators who work in the area of special education. As you will see, the money is often not there. The teachers are making remarkable innovative and important uses of technology. As you read through these articles, remember that these are special teachers and researchers working with special students in special circumstances. Remind yourself that we are lucky to have such special people working with us.