The Economics of Gifted Education
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Cover photo by Dan Nelson.
FROM THE EDITORS

We’ve got the Whole World in our Hands

I ask you, what is the economic price we are really paying by not supporting our gifted children?

The phrase, “Knowledge is power” has never been more true than in today’s knowledge-based economy. We are now living in a time when the production and distribution of knowledge is a key component for growth, wealth, businesses and employment. We, as human beings, drive creativity and innovation and have the ability to push ourselves to come up with new ideas that solve personal and global issues.

Today an individual person, using technology as a vehicle, can easily be heard by the whole world. And you don’t have to be a Churchill or a Gandhi to make an impact. You can be a young sophomore in high school who takes the time to blog creative ideas, or a gifted fifth-grade child who runs a globally oriented website.

At the very time when we should be investing more in our brightest minds, we’re investing less. In the United States we seem to be fixated on a short term strategy which focuses on churning out adequate test scores rather than helping to develop the minds and unique characteristics of the children who will carry our future on their shoulders. We seem willing to dig ourselves further into a globally non-competitive abyss rather than pausing, taking stock of where we’ll end up if we continue on our current path, and then redirecting ourselves toward a future that maximizes our human resources and individual talents.

In “The Cost of Not Supporting Our Gifted Students: Are We Shooting Ourselves in the Foot?” Carolyn Cooper states:

U.S. innovation desperately needs our students’ creative minds. They are already in our schools, but without the human and material resources these gifted students need in order to thrive as inventors, design engineers, planners, logicians, and other types of producers, our country will soon be as adrift as other nations already are.

So, what can we do about this, considering the lack of economic support that gifted education receives? Read through the departments in this issue for ideas and resources you can utilize to help the gifted children around you develop their full self and become more global.

Since schools often lack the teacher-time and resources to truly educate our children as the global citizens they need to become, Janet Gore and James Webb offer some easy-to-implement ideas for parents to help their children learn more about the world beyond the United States.

Beth Littrel’s RtI column discusses the economy of multipotentiality in gifted students; students who are “interested and talented in several disciplines”, and gives tips for helping them budget their time and resources to balance and develop all their interests.

In Carolyn Kottmeyer’s Web Watch column this issue she suggests some innovative educational resources and “new-fangled” approaches with an eye toward improving our “gifted students’ education, TIMSS test performance, and ultimately their contribution to our nation’s economy.”

And Brian Housand presents easy to use Skype tips in our Tech Tools for Today’s Teachers Department. He suggests ways you can utilize Skype in home or school in ways that will help today’s children become global digital citizens.

In Using Voki to Differentiate Instruction: Ideas for parents and teachers, Barbara Branch explains how to use Voki, a free, user-friendly and fun application that children can utilize to create their own avatar and voice recordings for presentations, websites and at-home projects. Her suggestions include creative uses for both parents and teachers.

The information in this issue will give you some user-friendly information and tools to share with your children with an eye toward developing them for the global future they face. We need to support, encourage, and educate our gifted children in ways that help them develop their individual strengths, talents, and potential for global influence, by giving them the opportunity to understand and integrate with different cultures and ideas.

But if we are not willing to invest in the education of our quick-learning gifted children who might take their ideas from brain to blog in a matter of minutes—ideas that can instantly change the world’s perspective—what are we doing?

The future success of our economy depends on our willingness to invest in the gifted minds of our children so that they have the skills, the understanding, and the wherewithal, to bring our country, and the world, into the next brave new phase of knowledge development.

As final food for thought, I’d like to offer you some words from the International Handbook on Giftedness. In chapter 47, On Giftedness and Economy: The Impact of Talented Individuals on the Global Economy, Larisa V. Shavinina writes:

The progress of human civilization is based on scientific, technological, educational, moral, political, and commercial achievements of the minds of its most talented individuals. The gifted are thus mainly responsible for innovations worldwide.

He concludes the chapter by stating that “Gifted and talented individuals play a great role in the economic prosperity of any country and the whole world.”

And so we must ask ourselves again, what is the real economic price we are paying by not supporting our gifted children and gifted education? It is a small world, after all.

—Karen Daniels, Managing Editor
“We can shift our gifted education funds to the general budget without any worry. Those kids will make it just fine on their own.”

How many times have we heard that excuse for cutting or eliminating funding for gifted education? The truth is that some gifted learners will “make it” in spite of neglect by our school systems; many won’t. We also need to ask ourselves, what will be the eventual cost of this neglect?

We often hear arguments that if we support struggling, lower-achieving students, we will benefit in the end as society (tax payers) will have fewer welfare recipients and prison inmates to support in the future. Surely that is a worthy goal—not merely for the economic saving, but for the benefit it brings to the individuals involved.

What does have me flummoxed is that many people don’t even try to flip the coin. Many see support for gifted education as a special privilege we give to gifted children. There is little recognition that on the other side of the coin are the many future benefits society can reap by providing opportunities for our brightest young minds to hone their skills and make intuitive leaps that will have the possibility of improving the lives of all people throughout the world in every succeeding generation.

Given the ever-increasing world globalization of national economies, we need to recognize that the United States must be competitive in the markets of the world if we wish to maintain our own standard of living and contribute to the lessening of poverty around the globe. As our authors explain, that competitive edge continues to tumble and disappear.

Another critical area of concern is that of international terrorists. The infamous destruction of New York’s World Trade Center, and damage to the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. changed our lives in ways large and small, but most noticeably in our means of transportation. As technology and communication have grown, they bring greater power to those wishing to harm us.

And there are so many other problems faced by our country and the world at large…

• sickness and disease
• international warfare
• global warming
• energy needs
• overpopulation
• waste of resources and pollution

…the list goes on. Where can the United States and the world look to resolve these problems? We believe that we must put our best hopes in the brightest minds now attending our schools. In their hands will be the resolution of these problems—if we have the foresight to provide them with the tools needed for problem solving. We cannot afford to ignore the educational needs of gifted children—not merely for the personal benefit to gifted students but for the economic and other benefits to society at large.

In this issue our authors provide information and examples that spell out the benefits of supporting gifted education to our local communities, the state of California, the United States of America, and the world.

Our lead feature article comes from Representative Elton Gallegly, U.S. Congressman from California, who has carried the banner for gifted education in Congress for many years. He introduced legislation that funded the Jacob Javits Grants providing for research and development of special projects to aid our understanding and support for gifted learners. Most recently he co-sponsored the TALENT Act (To Aid Gifted and High-ability Learners by Empowering the Nation’s Teachers Act). In his article, “The Economy of Gifted Education,” Representative Gallegly outlines the specifics of the Act and its benefits to our country.

From the national we go to the state level with California as an example of what state gifted education programs are facing. “From the Front Lines: The Perils of Gifted Education in California,” was written by Martha Flournoy, Chair of the Legislation Committee of the California Association for the Gifted, and Teri Burns, Legislative Advocate for CAG in Sacramento. In it they discuss the impact of budget cuts including possible shortening of the school year, the relationship of gifted students to the California work force, and how our students can be challenged to act in ways beneficial not only to themselves but to California.

Another means of supporting gifted education in California is through grants and scholarships provided by the California Foundation for Gifted Education. Established in 2007, this non-profit, tax-deductible organization is doing its part during this severe financial crisis by continuing to motivate and encourage gifted learners to develop their potentials. “Keeping the Faith: California Foundation for Gifted Education Continues Grants During Financial Crisis,” written by Judith Roseberry, a founder of the organization, serves not only as encouragement to California students but as a model for other states wishing to do something similar.

Turning back to the national scene, we received kind permission to reprint the Executive Summary of the most recent State of the States Report issued by the National Association for Gifted Children: “STATE of the NATION In Gifted Education. A Lack of Commitment to Talent Development A Half-Century After Winning the Space Race, Our Nation’s Competitiveness is at Risk.” The article also provides information to access the report in its entirety on the NAGC website.

Finally, we include a reprint by political analyst, Fareed Zakaria, appearing first in TIME Magazine’s October 17, 2011 edition. He states, “The evidence on the topic is pretty clear. The U.S. is slipping, by most measures of global competitiveness.” He points out the dangers of failure to invest in the future in his article, “The Hard Truth About ‘Going Soft.’”

We realize that the readers of Gifted Education Communicator are already supporters of gifted education and perhaps this issue is “singing to the choir.” However, we hope that it provides you with information and examples to use as you continue your efforts as advocates for our gifted learners to benefit not only the learners but also society at large.

—Margaret Gosfield, Acquisitions Editor
### Calendar of Conferences

#### 2012

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| **MAY 4–5, 2012** | Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education  
Wyndham Gardens, Exton, PA  
www.giftedpage.org                                                        |                                |                                             |
| **MAY 5, 2012** | Florida Association of the Gifted  
Osprey, FL  
www.flagifted.org                                                                 |                                |                                             |
| **JUNE 10–14, 2012** | Hormel Foundation Gifted and Talented Education Symposium  
Riverland Community College, Austin, MN  
www.austin.k12.mn.us                                                   |                                |                                             |
| **JUNE 29–JULY 3, 2012** | Profoundly Gifted Retreat  
Glyn Eyrie Castle, Colorado Springs, CO  
www.pgr.shuttlepod.org                                                        |                                |                                             |
| **JULY 8–13, 2012** | Confratute: The Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development  
Storrs, CT  
www.gifted.uconn.edu/confratute                                             |                                |                                             |
| **JULY 9–12, 2012** | Israel Center for Excellence through Education  
Jerusalem, Israel  
www.jerusalem.icieconference.net                                           |                                |                                             |
| **JULY 13–14, 2012** | Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted Conference Recommended  
Milwaukee, WI  
www.sengifted.org                                                             |                                |                                             |
| **JULY 16–17, 2012** | Institute for Teachers of Gifted Youth  
Vermillion, SD                                                              |                                |                                             |
| **JULY 19–21, 2012** | International Dabrowski Congress  
Denver, CO  
www.dabrowski9.weebly.com                                                   |                                |                                             |
| **JULY 22–27, 2012** | Gifted and Talented Edufest  
Boise State University, Boise, ID  
www.edufest.org                                                             |                                |                                             |
| **NOVEMBER 15–18, 2012** | National Association for Gifted Children  
Denver, CO  
www.nagc.org                                                              |                                |                                             |
| **SEPTEMBER 23–24, 2012** | South Dakota Association for Gifted Children  
Best Western Ramkota Inn, Pierre, SD  
www.sd-agc.org                                                            |                                |                                             |
| **SEPTEMBER 27–28, 2012** | Alabama Association for Gifted Children  
McWane Science Center, Birmingham, AL  
www.alabamagifted.org                                                        |                                |                                             |
| **OCTOBER 5–7, 2012** | Beyond IQ (BIO) West Coast  
Tentative, location to be announced, USA                                          |                                |                                             |
| **OCTOBER 11–12, 2012** | Wisconsin Association for Talented & Gifted  
Blue Harbor Resort, Sheboygan, Wisconsin  
Dells, WI  
www.wagt.org                                                             |                                |                                             |
| **OCTOBER 15–16, 2012** | Iowa Talented and Gifted Association  
Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines, IA  
www.iowatag.org                                                             |                                |                                             |
| **OCTOBER 21–22, 2012** | Virginia Conference on Gifted Education  
Wyndham Virginia Crossings, Richmond, VA  
www.vagifted.org                                                               |                                |                                             |
| **NOVEMBER 15–18, 2012** | National Association for Gifted Children  
Denver, CO  
www.nagc.org                                                              |                                |                                             |
| **NOVEMBER 28–30, 2012** | Texas Association for The Gifted And Talented  
Dallas, TX  
www.txgifted.org                                                             |                                |                                             |
A toddler’s world, though small, grows each day. She learns about the world gradually at first, then faster—first her own family, then progressively more about her neighborhood, then the town or city, other towns and cities, then the concept of being in a state, a part of a country, and finally the world. There are many different countries, governments, languages, cultures, and customs. How can we help our children learn to be a part of this larger world?

Clearly, the world has become “smaller” in the sense that communication is now almost instant, and foods and countless other goods are transported routinely across oceans and continents. Whole economies depend on international trade. There is no doubt that it is more important than ever for our children to know about the world beyond the United States. Schools are slow to pick up the slack on global topics; it’s hard enough these days for teachers to cover the three R’s, so educating children about the larger world can get lost in the hustle pretty easily. Sometimes teachers can supplement children’s learning with enrichment activities, including reading and talking about other countries and cultures, but largely it is up to parents to help children understand the interconnectedness of the world, as well as to get them thinking about our future world.

Until they learn specifics about other places in the world, all this talk about other countries and cultures is pretty abstract and hard for young children to imagine. One obvious and enjoyable technique to help children gain a more concrete understanding is travel. Visiting new places, whether in our own country or abroad, is one of the best ways for children to learn about the larger world.

With young children, figure out what they can reasonably do, and then start planning your trip—and be sure to involve them in the planning. If you live in New Mexico and decide to travel to Minnesota to vacation at a cabin on a lake, your children learn, among other things, about distance—that it takes three long days of driving to get there or a flight that involves changing planes. Parents can build enthusiasm with such comments as: “Let’s look at the map. What states will we have to drive through (or fly over) on our way? How many miles total is it? Let’s mark the route and see how many miles we go each part of the trip.” Children also learn some geography this way. Ask open-ended questions to get their imaginations sparking: “What do you think Minnesota will look like when we get there? How do you think it might be different from home? Why do you think Minnesota has so many lakes?”

Once there, talk about differences you see. Create a game to see how many things the children notice. “How are the houses different? Why do you think they are different? What else is different?” These kinds of questions help children learn to observe and to think about and make sense of what they see and experience.

It’s optimal if family travel includes other countries or destinations within the U.S. that have a climate and landscape far different from what your children experience at home (such as Alaska or Hawaii or national parks such as the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, or the Ever-
glades). Seeing different landscapes helps children understand how varied the world is in geology and biodiversity.

Prior to a trip, parents can ask their local librarian for help finding books about the places they plan to visit, and they can discuss with their children some of the history associated with those places. For example, the Laura Ingalls Wilder series describes pioneer life in Minnesota in ways that appeal to young children. Older children may enjoy learning about pioneers who traveled the Mississippi River, which starts as a tiny stream in northern Minnesota and grows to a mighty river that carries hundreds of barges each day between Minnesota and New Orleans. With this type of enrichment in their homes, children are more likely to develop their curiosity, research skills, and a lifetime love of learning.

Children in middle school and high school often have opportunities to travel with groups like Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts, religious groups, or school bands. Some of these groups even travel abroad. These experiences are invaluable. In high school and college, students can apply for student exchange programs in which they go to other countries and live with a family for a summer or a semester. Programs are available through Rotary International, American Friends Service, and others. If parents are reluctant to allow a high school-age child to live abroad, the family might instead apply to host a foreign student in their home here in the U.S. Some parents decide that the entire family can spend a year abroad, which not only broadens their experiences, but also models the importance of a world view. It also removes the children from the peer pressure in their local community and school to focus only on the limited and narrow interests in their locality.

Since travel isn’t always possible due to schedules, cost, or other factors, “armchair travel” is a good substitute. There are hundreds of books in libraries and bookstores for children of all ages about other countries and cultures. Reading these books is enjoyable and inexpensive, and children can be “transported” to many different places through their reading. National Geographic, through its TV programs and magazine, is a good source of information about other countries. TV shows like Nova, Animal Planet, or the Discovery Channel also offer educational programming featuring other countries.

As children get older, their concept of the world broadens, and the information they learn can be troubling. They know U.S. soldiers are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. They hear talk about the economic recession; their own family may be experiencing hardship due to unemployment. They are aware of global warming and the melting of the polar ice caps. These are worrisome matters for our gifted young people, as well as ourselves. As adults, we wonder what kind of world our children will inherit.

The world is going to get even more complex, so it does no good to act as though these worries don’t exist. Parents can help anxious youngsters understand the basic facts and then reassure them that there are people working to solve these problems worldwide. For example, when news stations reported the recent earthquake and resulting tsunami in Japan, families could discuss how these events affected not only the livelihoods of people in Japan, but those of people beyond that country as well—countries such as the United States were affected by the sudden halt in Japanese trade and exports. Children can find Japan on a map (or globe) and learn what time it is there, as well as how many hours it takes to fly in a plane there. They can learn about why Japan is important to the U.S.—what products we and other countries buy from it, how and why the earthquake stopped production in Japan’s factories, and how that in turn affected the world economy. In this way, children begin to understand the interdependence of countries through trade and commerce.

We want our gifted children to be problem solvers. It is important that they know the world is full of specialists working to solve problems, and they can begin early in life to recognize and value relevant information. When they grow up, they may well be one of those people working to solve some of the world’s biggest problems.

Foreign language study is also important. Children in other countries study English, many starting in kindergarten. In the U.S., however, budget cuts threaten to prevent substantive language study in many schools. Parents whose local school districts don’t offer foreign language classes can search for schools that do include language study. Many private schools provide these classes, but most large city school systems offer them as well. A magnet school within a school district is another option. Also, some summer camps offer foreign language study in which students in grades three and up can experience language immersion. Another option is for parents to invest in an electronic home learning program such as Rosetta Stone, which currently offers training in more than 35 languages. Parents and children can practice the lessons together. Certainly a trip to France is made richer if the traveler speaks some French, and the same holds true for other countries.

It is astonishing how many gifted children have a narrow worldview. Knowledge and ability do not exist in a vacuum, and they are at their most powerful when they are viewed in a worldwide context. Our brightest minds must become aware of how their actions can influence the world—for good or for bad—and they can only do this if we help them understand and appreciate the many different facets of our world that often are quite different from our own.


des of their children’s history associated with those places. For example, the Laura Ingalls Wilder series describes pioneer life in Minnesota in ways that appeal to young children. Older children may enjoy learning about pioneers who traveled the Mississippi River, which starts as a tiny stream in northern Minnesota and grows to a mighty river that carries hundreds of barges each day between Minnesota and New Orleans. With this type of enrichment in their homes, children are more likely to develop their curiosity, research skills, and a lifetime love of learning.

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As children get older, their concept of the world broadens, and the information they learn can be troubling. They know U.S. soldiers are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. They hear talk about the economic recession; their own family may be experiencing hardship due to unemployment. They are aware of global warming and the melting of the polar ice caps. These are worrisome matters for our gifted young people, as well as ourselves. As adults, we wonder what kind of world our children will inherit.

The world is going to get even more complex, so it does no good to act as though these worries don’t exist. Parents can help anxious youngsters understand the basic facts and then reassure them that there are people working to solve these problems worldwide. For example, when news stations reported the recent earthquake and resulting tsunami in Japan, families could discuss how these events affected not only the livelihoods of people in Japan, but those of people beyond that country as well—countries such as the United States were affected by the sudden halt in Japanese trade and exports. Children can find Japan on a map (or globe) and learn what time it is there, as well as how many hours it takes to fly in a plane there. They can learn about why Japan is important to the U.S.—what products we and other countries buy from it, how and why the earthquake stopped production in Japan’s factories, and how that in turn affected the world economy. In this way, children begin to understand the interdependence of countries through trade and commerce.

We want our gifted children to be problem solvers. It is important that they know the world is full of specialists working to solve problems, and they can begin early in life to recognize and value relevant information. When they grow up, they may well be one of those people working to solve some of the world’s biggest problems.

Foreign language study is also important. Children in other countries study English, many starting in kindergarten. In the U.S., however, budget cuts threaten to prevent substantive language study in many schools. Parents whose local school districts don’t offer foreign language classes can search for schools that do include language study. Many private schools provide these classes, but most large city school systems offer them as well. A magnet school within a school district is another option. Also, some summer camps offer foreign language study in which students in grades three and up can experience language immersion. Another option is for parents to invest in an electronic home learning program such as Rosetta Stone, which currently offers training in more than 35 languages. Parents and children can practice the lessons together. Certainly a trip to France is made richer if the traveler speaks some French, and the same holds true for other countries.

It is astonishing how many gifted children have a narrow worldview. Knowledge and ability do not exist in a vacuum, and they are at their most powerful when they are viewed in a worldwide context. Our brightest minds must become aware of how their actions can influence the world—for good or for bad—and they can only do this if we help them understand and appreciate the many different facets of our world that often are quite different from our own.

Janet L. Gore, M.A., M.Ed., has over thirty years experience in gifted education as a teacher, administrator, counselor, policy maker, and parent. For three years she was the State Director of Gifted Education in Arizona and served on the Board of Directors of the Arizona Association for Gifted and Talented. She is co-author of two major award-winning books—Grandparents’ Guide to Gifted Children and A Parent’s Guide to Gifted Children.

James T. Webb, Ph.D., the founder of SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted Children), has been recognized as one of the 25 most influential psychologists nationally on gifted education. The lead author of five books and several DVDs about gifted children, Dr. Webb served on the Board of Directors for the National Association for Gifted Children. In 2010 he received the prestigious Ruth A. Martinson Past-Presidents’ Award from the California Association for the Gifted.
Neglecting our gifted students carries a high cost that for decades has been understood by parents as well as creative, highly effective teachers who sincerely appreciate these extraordinary youngsters. Parents able to afford special schooling, such as certain private education settings uniquely geared to gifted students, often choose this avenue, which, they assume, will address their children’s learning needs exceptionally well. Private school settings, however, are ideal for some but not all gifted students.

Gifted students in public schools, on the other hand, have largely been neglected at the national, state, and local levels. There are occasional exceptions, thankfully, but special services for gifted students are regrettably absent from most public schools throughout America. Why? Four reasons come to mind. First, gifted students learn differently from how age mates learn; they perceive the world through a lens other students and most teachers do not. They make creative connections between and among ideas that often lead to innovation. Creativity is paramount with gifted students.

Second, gifted youngsters are not automatically tested even when teachers know these youngsters are significantly brighter and more capable than their age mates; referrals for gifted education take time away from other activities teachers prefer. By not referring these exploring learners to an environment in which they can and will think, hypothesize, research, and produce new knowledge, a school may be actionable for not providing an education commensurate with the student’s potential.

The age-old platitude, “gifted students will do just fine on their own,” is a third reason. It’s not true, of course, but most teachers not wishing to “bother” with each student’s learning needs individually won’t do so if not specifically directed by their supervisor!

A fourth reason cited for not supporting gifted students is an insidious one. It raises its ugly head at annual meetings in small, primarily rural communities across America. These meetings are legendary with regard to passing the local school budget. Voters often protest vehemently, assuring that programs and services not state- or federally-mandated will not win their vote!

Since gifted students have but a few known supporters in Congress and the advocacy of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), most of our divergent-thinking, abstract, and creative youngsters in public schools coast-to-coast today are merely marking time. Tragically, far too many of America’s superior minds are wasting away because most voters in their school districts don’t know gifted students personally so don’t care about the education they require. If these naysayers were themselves parents of gifted children, however,
the tables would be turned significantly. Excuses for not supporting gifted students abound at every level of public education.

In addition to these costs is the disappointing new finding from a Fordham Institute study (2011) that many high-performing students are losing ground as they move from elementary to middle school and, again, from middle to high school, raising concern about “America’s role as a world leader in innovation” (Shah, 2011). Statistics revealed from this study, “Do High Flyers Maintain Their Altitude?” include the following with regard to America’s gifted students:

• 57.3% of students who were high achievers (scoring in 90th %ile in Grade 3 math) maintained their academic edge through Grade 8
• 52.4% of 43,000 students (scoring in top 10th %ile in Grade 6 reading) scored comparably well as Grade 10 students
• Individual students were compared with their own ranking in the 2008 Fordham report.

NCLB’s goal for all students to reach proficiency on math and reading tests may have had a negative effect on high-achieving students, according to Michael J. Petrilli, Executive VP of Fordham Institute. In a note of implied regret he has stated that while the country has made good progress for students at the bottom and for poor and minority students, “raising the bottom just can’t be the only thing we do.”

The Fordham report, says Nancy Green, Executive Director of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), shows that high-achieving students are the ones being left behind. She hopes America will come around to “putting its money where its mouth is.”

OTHER COSTS OF IGNORING OUR GIFTED STUDENTS: JEOPARDIZING AMERICA’S FUTURE

A St. Louis, MO newspaper account that caught my eye this summer was entitled, “Cuts in gifted education hurt kids’ potential” (Sultan, 2011, July 3). The author reminded readers of the national conversation that the flip side of only bringing the lowest-achieving students up to proficiency continues to be neglecting our brightest students, resulting in a loss of America’s human capital. She also included the following statistics related to gifted education cuts in Missouri (MO) but which have been and are being made coast to coast throughout our nation altogether too often:

• Recent cuts in the federal budget eliminated MO’s only federal grant for gifted education.
• MO eliminated its set-aside state funding for gifted education in 2006.
• The saddest of all? Fewer than 60% of MO’s 522 school districts now report any gifted education programming whatsoever.

As long as gifted education “is seen as something they can afford when times are good but is not essential,” according to Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, Director, Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University, the costs of eliminating gifted education for our deep-thinking students will continue to mount.

Additional costs of ignoring our gifted students include:

• a dramatic drop in the growth of our nation’s economy
• innovation of energy-based industrial processes and products will no longer be retained in the U.S. but will move to China and other countries with the assets to purchase them
• diminishing returns on investments will continue to threaten American productivity
• everyday fallout that we’re seeing already in home foreclosures
• a general demise of America’s cities, towns, communities, and neighborhoods

These are losses that reflect greed and selfishness in large measure. These costs affect our most capable problem-solving students directly.

A BOLD SUGGESTION: SUBSTITUTING “NOVEL THINKERS” FOR THE “GIFTED” LABEL

Education specifically geared to America’s students with the most vibrant imaginations and innovative ideas continues to be considered a “frill” in this country. Note: I’ve not used the words “creative,” “bright,” “intelligent,” or “gifted” in the previous sentence. These terms have not served gifted students particularly well with respect to public opinion since, for many taxpayers, these terms are often thought to be automatically infected with elitism, which runs counter to the principles upon which America was founded.

For decades those of us in gifted education have used the familiar lexicon of our field as naturally as physicists, farmers, and florists use the terms unique to theirs. But few adjectives in the English language appear to provoke bitter controversy as fiercely as the term “gifted” does when describing students!

To many Americans the adjective “gifted” is highly complimentary. Gilbert Stuart, who painted the iconic image of George Washington that hangs in the National Gallery of Art, is considered a gifted artist. Pavarotti is renowned as a gifted tenor, a giant of today’s musical world. Countless others have earned “gifted” status, also, as will more from the pool of talent developing in America daily. And to their admirers the term “gifted” is undeniably apt.

But for too many other Americans the term “gifted,” when applied to students of extraordinary ability, seems high-handed and elitist. I myself have seen a teacher purposely swagger somewhat at the mention of the word “gifted” to describe highly-capable students. “Well, la-di-da! So I’m supposed to treat them special? They’re no better than anybody else!” The bitterness this teacher displayed during this performance absolutely stung me!

The notion that all students should be identical copies of each other is both feeble-minded and baseless. Teacher resistance to students we consider “gifted” is rampant throughout America, with few notable exceptions, given the millions of students in our public schools today. Students in private schools occasionally experience the slings and arrows of chiding and criticism from the outside, but seldom from within the schools themselves. The support gifted students in private schools receive helps them wear the badge of elitism quite successfully.

Lest readers of this article suspect I’m recommending private educational settings for our nation’s “high flyers,” as I’ve referred
to these youngsters in previous articles, let me assure you that such a position is not the case. I’ve mentioned private schools in this piece to identify the major reason why many parents do choose to enroll their gifted children in private schools: to avoid the hassle and many experience with public school testing to determine whether or not their child is regarded “gifted.”

Please note that I said, “Regarded Gifted”

Having worked in gifted education for most of my professional life, I can tell you that students are identified for gifted education varies from state-to-state, and often from district-to-district within a state. Testing for placements in special programs depends largely upon practical criteria, e.g., size of group of already-identified students; purpose of the program; how the program operates and how frequently; how many teachers work in the program; what the program expectations of student productivity are; and other criteria the school or teacher may choose to impose, including intelligence testing.

U.S. innovation desperately needs our students’ creative minds. They are already in our schools, but without the human and material resources these gifted students need in order to thrive as inventors, design engineers, planners, logicians, and other types of producers, our country will soon be as adrift as other nations already are.

REFERENCES


Carolyn R. Cooper, Ph.D., is a retired assistant superintendent and served as the specialist in gifted education with the Maryland State Department of Education for several years. A seasoned district-level coordinator of gifted education in several districts throughout the country, she was active for many years in the National Association for Gifted Children as well as in state and regional organizations advocating for and supporting gifted and talented youngsters. Most recently, she has completed a two-year term as editor of the GAMBit, the quarterly publication of the Gifted Association of Missouri.

The Most Economical Program for Gifted Learners

By Lanny Ebenstein

There are but few people,” John Stuart Mill wrote in his classic work On Liberty (1859), “in comparison with the whole of mankind whose experiments, if adopted by others, would be any improvement over existing practice. But these few are the salt of the earth, without whom the rest of the world would become a stagnant pool.”

One of the most exciting and economical programs for the gifted that this writer ever has seen is located at Washington Elementary School in Santa Barbara, California. For many years, the Santa Barbara Unified School District, like most school districts, had site-based or pull-out programs for GATE. However, parents and faculty desired a more encompassing program, so the Washington GATE strand was born.

Essentially, the Washington GATE program truly is for gifted children. If children do not score above the 95th percentile, they are not admitted. The program is for third to sixth graders and runs all day. Children are enrolled in the program from the entire Santa Barbara area. The program has been a true magnet for parents with gifted children to move into the Santa Barbara district and to live near Washington School.

Probably about one-third of students who would qualify for the Washington GATE program enroll in it. The remaining two-thirds or so continue at the Santa Barbara Unified School District’s eight other schools of residence, which have site-based GATE programs.

The argument for gifted and talented education is that children who are intellectually gifted, and who are gifted in other respects, merit special programs that will challenge them and most develop their abilities. Of what should these programs consist? Education is an individual experience and a collective one. Children learn much from each other; they also learn much on their own.

The virtue of a GATE strand is that it allows all-day GATE instruction across the curriculum with other children of similar abilities. When this writer served on the Santa Barbara Board of Education, it was rare that parents or others thanked the Board after a decision was made—they were too busy with their kids! It was different with the Washington GATE program. It remains the case that, years after this decision, Washington GATE parents thank members of the Board of Education for establishing this program.

The key to the Washington GATE program is that it doesn’t cost anything—in the sense that no extra district funds are expended on it. Children have to test into the program, and then staffing for the GATE strand is the same as for all other elementary students in the district. Any additional GATE funds are raised by parents and supporters in the community. There is no additional cost to the district.

The virtue of a GATE strand is that it can be implemented more economically than either pull-out or site-based programs. As long as there is no increase in staffing ration for GATE students compared to other students, no extra GATE expenses are incurred.

It is not the case that one program is right for all children. Some children will do best in a strand, others in a pull-out or site-based program. But a GATE strand may be an economical way of achieving more diversity in GATE programs.

Lanny Ebenstein, Ph.D., is President of the California Center for Public Policy and former President of the Santa Barbara School District’s Board of Education in Santa Barbara, California. He received his Ph.D. from the London School of Economics.
Students with exceptional intelligence and talent attend schools throughout the United States—in farm communities, suburbia, and inner cities. Yet, because of the pressures of dealing with gang influences or economic stagnation, in too many school districts many gifted and talented students go unrecognized. They may be noticed for acting out or daydreaming. They may be labeled lazy or disruptive. But in reality, they are uncut diamonds, and nobody notices.

It’s no secret that America’s high-ability students are not keeping pace with their peers around the world. China tops the charts on the most recent international tests while U.S. students fall farther behind. As other nations are redoubling their commitment to identify and serve high-potential learners, the U.S. is failing these students, jeopardizing our future economic well being in the process.

For example, last year the U.S. placed 23rd in science and 31st in math, and trailed such economic competitors as Japan, Canada, Germany, and France in mathematics and Japan, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom in science.

AN AVENUE TO SUCCESS

This must change. And it starts with giving our most gifted children an avenue to success. Much of the time, advanced ability goes unnoticed, specifically for children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. It is crucial that these students are stimulated and challenged through rigorous curriculum given by teachers who are trained and prepared to support this type of talent.

We often think of gifted and talented students as having the most advantages in our schools. But if their talents are not recognized, they oftentimes don’t even reach the potential we would expect from average students.

We have very intelligent kids in street gangs who are tearing down society instead of contributing to its success. We need to reach them early and challenge them so that they, too, can succeed.

We need to give our teachers the tools to reach these children early and challenge their intellects. Not surprisingly, studies show that teachers who are trained in the math and sciences produce students who achieve at higher levels. We need trained math and science teachers to prepare our children for an increasingly technological work world.

In addition, identifying gifted and talented students and supporting their needs in the classroom requires specialized knowledge and skills, yet more than 60 percent of teachers in the United States have never received training in gifted education strategies.

THE TALENT ACT

To begin addressing these problems in a meaningful and cost-effec-
tive manner, I introduced, along with Representative Donald Payne of New Jersey, H.R. 1674—the TALENT Act (To Aid Gifted and High-Ability Learners by Empowering the Nation's Teachers Act). Senators Chuck Grassley of Iowa and Robert Casey Jr. of Pennsylvania introduced a companion bill in the Senate.

Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), teachers have been pushed to focus their efforts exclusively on students near or below the proficiency level, leaving advanced students languishing in the classroom. The TALENT Act seeks to address this problem by providing for greater transparency and public reporting on how schools serve high-ability learners, and by providing teachers with the skills and strategies they need to work with this special needs population.

In addition to reporting on high-potential and high-performing students, TALENT will require states and districts to include these students in their plans on how they will use federal Title I funding. It will fill the void in teacher knowledge and skills by authorizing a competitive grant program to train teachers in the strategies known to be effective with high-ability students and to explore new approaches through competitive demonstration grants.

To address the acute needs of students in rural and urban disadvantaged and underserved settings, it will enhance Title I and rural education policies to support high-ability learners in these environments. TALENT will also assist states and school districts by improving data collection that can inform policy makers and school leaders about what is happening to gifted students and by disseminating resources that can be used by teachers and parents to support these students. Specifically, The TALENT Act will:

- Require that assessments are vertically aligned and able to measure student knowledge of standards established above their grade level.
- Establish ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) requirements that states, districts, and schools report learning growth for all students—including the performance of their most advanced students—on state report cards.
- Require states to include in their application for funds under Title II, Part A Grant (nearly $3 billion in 2010) a description of the comprehensive strategy that a state will use to improve educators’ teaching skills for students who are gifted and talented—including identifying specific learning needs and tailoring instruction to meet such needs.
- Authorize the Professional Development and Best Practices Grant Program, a targeted, competitive grant program that will conduct school-wide and classroom-based research to develop innovative instructional practices and provide high quality professional development for teachers and other educators.
- Modify Title I to require Title I schools to describe how they plan to identify and serve gifted and talented students, including high-ability students who have not been identified as gifted.
- Expand the Rural Education Achievement Program to allow for funding and services to support gifted and talented students who live in rural communities through activities such as professional development for teachers.
- Establish a priority for these students in the professional development and innovative instructional practices grants under the Act.
- Establish a National Research and Dissemination Center that will conduct research on strategies for identifying and teaching gifted students, develop resources for teacher training and professional development systems and for parents to help them support their children’s education, and disseminate findings broadly, including to the technical assistance centers already established by the Education Technical Assistance Act.
- Direct the Secretary of Education to collect data and report on the education of gifted and talented students to ensure that the nation’s most advanced students are getting the educational supports they need to achieve at the highest levels.

Currently we are spreading the word to bring more attention to the plight of our nation’s gifted children and how the TALENT Act can help to reverse this situation. While it is unfortunate that TALENT was not included in Chairman Kline’s H.R. 2445, the State and Local Funding Flexibility Act, there may be opportunities to amend H.R. 2445 to retain and hopefully to improve gifted and talented programs.

The nation has neglected the needs of its high-ability students for too long and at tremendous consequences. If we fail to act now, our students with the highest potential will continue to go unidentified and unchallenged, resulting in lost talent for our communities and nation.

There is a clear national need to develop the talent of the more than 3 million gifted and talented learners in the United States, whose performance is falling behind that of students in other industrialized nations.

It also is well documented that gifted and talented students have special learning needs requiring specialized educational services if they are to reach their potential. Unfortunately, a lack of federal investment in this population means that availability and access to these services depends solely on state and local funds, which is highly variable and unpredictable.

Our gifted and talented students are one of our nation’s greatest natural resources. They are our future Thomas Edisons, George Ger- 
shwins, George Washington Carvers and Bill Gates. We fail them and our society—and will continue to fall behind the rest of world—if we ignore and suppress their talents.
California continues to experience economic challenges, and as we have seen in the recently passed budget, the cuts to education are only increasing. It is disturbing to see that while the largest state in the nation allocates most of its revenue to education, it is also challenged by low performance and in troubling high school graduation rates. With limited resources, California should be focusing its energy on education with innovative programs to help all of our students, including our gifted learners.

According to the Department of Finance, California can anticipate only modest growth in the K-12 population, less than 0.2 percent, through 2013-14 with only slightly higher rates in the next few years, as the children of baby boomers move on to college. This would result in only minimal increases in education spending to cover that growth, far less than the 8% increase needed to meet Medi-Cal caseload increases. As the economy increases slowly, it is unlikely that additional funds will be available to have per-student revenues keep pace with inflation, and virtually impossible that funds will increase.

NEWSPAPER HEADLINES RECOUNT WOES OF CALIFORNIA EDUCATION

Budget Shortfall Could Prompt Shorter School Year In California (phillyBurbs.com, updated November 20, 2011)


From Pennsylvania to California, newspaper headlines are proclaiming the “dire” conditions in California schools due to its budget woes. Patrick Berkery in a report included in the Silicon Valley Mercury News states,

According to EdSource Extra a report released by the California Legislative Analyst’s Office on Wednesday [November 16, 2011] predicts a severe budget shortfall, prompting the threat of a shorter school year.

This news comes just as several districts were able to restore days they had previously trimmed from their instructional calendars. Currently in California, eight of
the state’s 30 largest districts still have the once-standard 180-day instructional year. A dozen have less than a 180-day year, with nine of those schools having the 175-day minimum.

And things could get even worse; the legislative budget passed by the California legislature last June stipulates that if state revenues include a decline in excess of 2-billion-dollars from what was anticipated to balance the budget; districts would have permission to cut their school year to 168 days. The national average is 180 days of instruction per school year. In the Silicon Valley Mercury News.com, Berkery states that, “A school year of 168 days would put California behind every state except Colorado and Michigan.”

Juliet Williams and Judy Lin, writing for the Associated Press and posted in the phillyBurbs.com, (the suburbs of Philadelphia) report that the California Legislative Analyst’s office, as of late November, predicts a $3.7 billion shortfall of the $88.4 billion in revenue whereby the governor and state legislators based their summer budget agreement.

Furthermore, legislation passed in 2008 permits local school districts to accept their district’s allotment for gifted education but divert it to other general fund programs, such as transportation, special education, and instructional materials. Many districts have taken advantage of this permissive legislation, leaving their gifted programs at reduced funding or with no state funding at all.

A BLUEPRINT FOR GREAT SCHOOLS

As State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson recently noted in a message regarding the report from his transition advisory team, A Blueprint For Great Schools, it is clear that it will take a team effort to candidly assess where we are, set ambitious goals, and describe a shared vision.

Our goals are fitting for the most prosperous state in the wealthiest nation in the world. We seek the day when all children of California—regardless of where they live, the color of their skin, or their economic circumstances—receive the start in life that comes with a world-class education. We seek the day when all students are prepared to pursue their dreams, participate in the rich cultural life of our state, and compete in our global economy. We seek the day when every enterprise in California—public and private—has access to a pool of talent that both attracts the world’s leading businesses and hastens the development and success of new ones, creating opportunities for all.

Among the Blueprint’s recommendations is making a priority in the area of curriculum and assessment to:

- Revise State curriculum standards, frameworks and assessments to better reflect the demands of a knowledge-based society and economy that incorporates new Common Core Standards (CCS) and builds on the strengths and needs of diverse learners.
- Incorporate technology as a key component of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Support high levels of literacy and biliteracy to prepare students for the globalized society they are entering.

GIFTED STUDENTS A VITAL ASSET TO STATE ECONOMY

Gifted students in California are a vital asset for the sustainability of that future workforce and the economy of the state. However, it seems that policymakers are not taking the initiative to further implement programs that foster gifted students’ progress to their full potential. The state needs to further explore the best methods of teaching gifted learners and understand the capacity that these students have to impact the economy of the state in a positive way.

A recent study by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute finds that many high-performing students lose ground from the elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school. In tracking over 80,000 students, they found that of students who scored at the 90th percentile or above in math as 3rd graders, only 57% scored as well by the time they were 8th graders. Losing more than 40% of our potential is astonishing and something we cannot afford.

In 2009-10, California spent almost $1 billion in Workforce Investment Act funds to retrain and give job skills to workers who either dropped out or just graduated from high school. It is imperative to know how much gifted learners can offer the workforce in the state given the ever-increasing globalization of our economy. For that reason, we must be effective advocates for gifted learners, and the state should take action to support these students who could be instrumental in creating financial benefits for the state.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

One of the most obvious ways that gifted learners could have an impact on society and the economy is to give them access to a fast track in science, invention, and the arts. The recent passing of Apple Co-founder and CEO, Steve Jobs provides a reminder of the impact a single inventive mind can have upon a whole society. We need more Steve Jobs’.

Another way for supporting gifted students as a force in California’s economic well-being is seen in the recent study by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy, Technical Difficulties: Meeting California’s Workforce Needs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Fields. Key findings from the report show that the supply of STEM-educated workers is not keeping pace with demand and may decrease California’s strength in the STEM fields. The two industry sectors most likely to be affected by STEM skill shortages are:
- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services.

California has historically benefited from a large share of STEM jobs. On average, STEM occupations are higher paying than non-STEM occupations, making them economically important to the
state. Diminishing STEM jobs in California means a decrease in the California standard of living.

California needs to act now to better prepare and challenge students in math and science to foster interest in these STEM fields. Engaging gifted students is critical to that success. Conclusions and recommendations from the report included:

- encouraging the formation of student interest groups that appeal to women and minorities around STEM
- better coordinating of educational programs with industry needs to ensure that graduates have the skills necessary to succeed at STEM occupations in high demand
- encouraging gifted students to explore and excel in these areas at a young age

Excluding provisions for gifted students to be actively engaged in STEM fields could prove disastrous—not merely for individual students, but for the economy of California.

THE TALENT ACT

While parents and teachers have sought resources to provide for gifted learners, the political will during tough economic times focuses on those at the opposite end of the spectrum. Some hope is offered with the introduction at the national level of the TALENT ACT (To Aid Gifted and High-Ability Learners by Empowering the Nation’s Teachers), which would require states and local districts to include gifted and talented and high-potential students in their plans for using federal funding; it would also require states to report on the performance of gifted students on their annual state report cards, and help better prepare teachers to work with this special-needs population (H.R. 1674 and S.B. 857). Violation of the TALENT Act would preclude states from receiving federal funds for some of their state education programs. Money talks.

National Association for Gifted Children President Ann Robinson recently stated,

As a nation, we have neglected our gifted and talented and high-potential students for far too long, to our detriment. Not only do our students continue to lag behind the world on the most recent international tests, but also few U.S. students are reaching the highest levels on state, national, and international tests—a sign that we are not focusing on developing advanced talent in our schools.

The TALENT Act is a meaningful and cost-effective solution to this problem.

Achieving excellence in our schools today is necessary to achieve economic recovery and vitality tomorrow. If we fail to identify and develop our most talented students, we fail to prepare for the future.

“Too often, our society accepts the myths about students with gifts and talents, including that they will do fine on their own, even when research tells us the opposite is true,” said Marilyn Friend, president of the Council for Exceptional Children. “The TALENT Act serves as a wake-up call to our nation and our educational system to recognize this forgotten student population.”

Just as the state of California deliberately invests in students in low performing public schools, it seems prudent to fill the needs that still exist in services for gifted learners. We recognize intrinsically that in-

“The TALENT Act serves as a wake-up call to our nation and our educational system to recognize this forgotten student population.”

TERI BURNS has served as the Legislative Advocate for CAG for the last 6 years. Previously she served at the CA Dept. of Education as the Deputy Superintendent for Government Affairs under Superintendents Delaine Eastin and Jack O’Connell.

MARTHA FLOURNOY began her association with CAG as a parent representative to the Board of Directors in 1990. After that she was elected as the first parent to serve as its president. She has been CAG’s Legislative Committee Chair for more than ten years working closely with leaders in both Sacramento and Washington, D.C. She is retired from the Oxnard School District in southern California.
Keeping the Faith
California Foundation for Gifted Education Continues Grants During Financial Crisis

By Judith Roseberry

Almost every day we read of new increases in tuition, fees, and higher education costs. The very programs and sources of information our gifted youngsters need seem to have disappeared.

Nonprofit organizations are created to support a variety of endeavors thought worthy of private and collective assistance where public funds are not available or forthcoming. Now perhaps more than ever before, California is failing to provide gifted learners with the support they need to develop their full potential and become the contributing members to society that we know they are capable of, and from which we have much to gain as a people. The California Foundation for Gifted Education continues its support of gifted education even though donations to all nonprofits have fallen dramatically during the economic downturn.

On March 3, 2007, the California Foundation for Gifted Education was formally introduced to an enthusiastic audience at the San Jose Museum of Art. It was an appropriate setting for such an important occasion. The attendees were dressed in their finest as they made their way through the beautiful galleries. The food was delicious with the rotating chocolate fountain calling everyone back to its taste…over and over.

There was a purpose to all of this. The California Foundation for Gifted Education is a nonprofit, tax-deductible organization that was created to perpetuate the future of gifted education in California. It is independent of the California Association for the Gifted (CAG) to enable a tax-deductible status while working alongside CAG. Its primary activities include providing scholarships and grants, and funding research projects to benefit students and teachers.

For this opening event of the Foundation, Sharon Freitas organized a successful silent auction that brought in additional funds...
for the Foundation. This was no small accomplishment! This particular achievement exemplifies the whole intent of the Foundation: working diligently and wisely to gather up enough monies to give scholarships and fund projects. The Foundation gave out six scholarships to students and two grants to teachers at that first distribution of monies. Among other things, the money was used for college expenses or for teachers to continue their own education in gifted education. The grants may also be awarded for projects in the schools for which there isn’t enough money in the school budget. This Foundation grows no grass under its feet!

The Foundation is a small fund, dedicated to continue with research grants and funds to facilitate classroom activities. As foundations all over the country are feeling the impact of the economy on donations and activities, the CFGE continues to provide small but meaningful grants and awards.

**GRANTS AND AWARDS FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS**

One of the pillars of the California Foundation for Gifted Education is our dedication to helping both teachers and parents. We strive to support our teachers and parents with grants and awards to fund projects or research that they feel strongly about and yet have no other avenue for funding.

**MAY SEAGOE MEMORIAL GRANT**

**Amount of Grant/Award:** $1,000.00

**History:**

The contributions of May Violet Seagoe will live long in the memory of her countless friends and associates. Her reputation as an educator and psychologist transcends the boundaries of the nation, and throughout her distinguished professional career, many sought her advice and counsel. She was never too busy to help a student or a colleague and participated actively in her duties as a professor and administrator in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles where she initiated the field of special education.

Dr. Seagoe’s research and writings, done with a concentration on the gifted, on learning theory, and on exceptional children were well known throughout the nation, and her opinions were sought by universities, research groups, and professional associations. Her books include, *The Teacher’s Guide to the Learning Process, Yesterday was Tuesday, All Day and All Night*, and *Terman and the Gifted*. This last publication had special meaning for Professor Seagoe since she was one of Dr. Terman’s gifted pupils and had herself been studied from early childhood into adulthood.

**Purpose:**

The May V. Seagoe Memorial Scholarship is California Foundation for Gifted Education’s grant to educators and is intended to:

- foster excellence within gifted education
- encourage commitment to serve gifted students;
- promote an understanding of giftedness through research.

**Eligibility:**

California educators are eligible who are:

- currently enrolled in or planning to enter a program of advanced study in gifted/talented education, or
- proposing to implement a research project that will contribute to gifted/talented education.

Two very deserving teachers from Folsom, California are among those who have received the $1000 May Seagoe Scholarship: Kelly Hillesland and Vicki Morgan. Both teachers used the grant money to continue their education with an emphasis on gifted and talented education. Kelly and Vicki are both seeking National Board Certification. This is a rigorous task and will benefit the curriculum and instruction for the youngsters in their school district.

Jennifer Krough used her May Seagoe grant for doctoral studies researching models of teaching.

Jana Wong used her Seagoe grant for Master’s study research on accelerated learning.

Jane Troy and Vicki Sosa from Simi Valley USD used a shared Seagoe grant to attend the 49th annual CAG conference.

**JEANNE DELP MEMORIAL GRANT**

**Amount of Grant/Award:** $250.00

**History:**

Jeanne Delp was a remarkable educator who made a difference in the lives of children and adults throughout her long career. Jeanne was instrumental in statewide efforts to make parents truly equal partners in the education of gifted and talented young learners.

Jeanne conducted landmark studies about the educational needs of gifted students while working as a state Department of Education consultant in the 1950s. Her efforts, along with others, resulted in the 1961 legislation that created the Mentally Gifted Minors (MGM) program; this has since evolved into the Gifted and Talented Education program, known as GATE. The state-funded program is still operating today. However, its impact has been severely diluted during the economic crisis affecting all our schools because the state legislature now allows local school districts to divert the GATE funding to other programs of their choice.

**Purpose:**

Each Jeanne Delp grant given by California Foundation for Gifted Education facilitates a project designed to promote the active involvement or education of the parents of a classroom of gifted youngsters. The aim is to include parents to help secure the success of GATE students. These grants are awarded for projects where funding would otherwise not be possible.

**Eligibility:**

Educators who apply for the grant must be California certified GATE teachers. Applications must include clear goals, and a timeline to include dissemination of the project. Dissemination could be in the form of a presentation at the CAG conference or an article in the CAG Intercom newsletter.

**GATE CLASSROOM GRANT**

**Amount of Grant:** $300–$500

**Purpose:**

These grants are intended for educators who “think outside the box” and wish to enhance the GATE instruction within their classrooms. The funding of this award is meant to facilitate a project that other funds do not or cannot finance.
Eligibility:
California educators who apply for the grant must be certified to teach gifted classes.

Karen Luke from Davis used her classroom grant to develop a literature unit for her gifted 5th grade students.

Joan Kerr from Rosedale USD used her classroom grant to purchase video equipment to film model lessons.

GRANTS AND AWARDS TO STUDENTS
Fostering The Love Of Learning

When a student has a desire and a motivation to succeed both inside and outside the classroom, it should be encouraged. As a parent or educator it is vital to be supportive and to foster the love of learning. This love of learning will last a lifetime. The California Foundation for Gifted Education strives to encourage and support the hopes and dreams of students. Whether their dreams are to go to college or to expand their knowledge and experience in an activity that is important to them, the California Foundation for Gifted Education is there.

MARGARET GOSFIELD COLLEGE GRANT
Amount of Grant/Award: $1,000.00

History:
Margaret lives her life in service to gifted students. She has been a teacher, a district program coordinator, an educational consultant, and a regional advocacy leader. She has served on the Board of Directors of the California Association for the Gifted for over 20 years and has been our journal editor for the past twelve years. Intellectual and artistic passion are very important to Margaret. She believes it is passion that epitomizes the character of who a gifted child is and that this passion should be validated and celebrated within each of our gifted children.

Purpose:
This Scholarship is more than grade point averages and honors received in school. It is intended for gifted students who are entering a college or university and have a passion beyond the academics—an intellectual or artistic passion that drives them to succeed beyond the classroom. It is meant to fuel the intellectual and artistic passion within students without regard to the financial status of their parents.

Eligibility:
• Student must currently be in grade 11 or 12, and attending classes in a recognized California educational setting.
• Students must be planning to enter recognized schools of advanced education during the following school year. Juniors expecting to participate in an early entrance program at a participating college or university are eligible.
• Student must demonstrate outstanding achievement in a chosen area of talent or giftedness.

AWARD RECIPIENTS

Each year the Foundation receives a large number of applications for the Gosfield scholarships. The scholarship committee carefully considers essays, letters of recommendation, records of academic achievement, and samples of excellence submitted by each candidate. The bright promise shown by these remarkable young people is evident in the words of the students themselves and of those recommending them.

Wesley Yu, of Irvine, was a participant in Cancer Genetics Research at the University of California at Irvine while a senior in high school, part of the American Cancer Society Educational Program. Steven Lipkin, director of the Cancer Genetics Clinic stated, “Wes is an extremely promising young physician-scientist. I give him my highest recommendation and predict he will make great contributions to biomedicine.” Wes has a G.P.A. of 4.56 and scored a perfect 2,400 on the SAT. Wesley is an avid tennis player and volunteers his time to assist with the U.S. Tennis Association Wheelchair Tennis program. He also volunteers two hours per week to perform the clarinet and play the piano during church services, as well as singing in the youth choir, One Voice. Wesley has been awarded numerous awards and scholarships, as he is a very accomplished student. Jennifer Moore, Wesley’s English teacher described him as “an ideal student in the classroom, a student who works in everyone’s best interest, a true gem.”

At his very young age, Wesley has already made a significant contribution to his community; we can only imagine what will be the cumulative benefits to the world by the end his lifetime.

Ryan Hnarakis, from Moorpark, credits his disabled brother for teaching him to genuinely respect other people, a lesson Ryan now teaches others by his own example. He has donated his time and energy and shared his vast knowledge and passion for learning with an after-school tutoring program called Project Pride. Ryan has been testing software for various companies since the age of seven. He has been contacted by Audatex to consult on running product software on individual workstations that would be incompatible on the network server. His recommendations and innovative alternative solutions were presented to the firm’s IT department as part of a major client release. Ronald Phillips, Sr. Business Analyst for Audatex said, “Ryan provides us with proactive suggestions. His computer skills are outstanding. We appreciate his detailed explanations. He is a truly talented individual with superior computer skills. I am confident that Ryan will far exceed your expectations as a recipient of your scholarship to support an individual with a passion for learning.”

Elisa Moles, of Lodi, is the kind of student one remembers. Both academically and musically, Elisa excels. She is an accomplished flutist, participating in a number of musical groups, including her high school marching and symphonic band and a local youth symphony. She has been selected to participate in numerous honor bands, frequently securing the principal flute chair. Last year she was the winner of the Concerto Competition for the Central Valley Youth Symphony and was honored to perform Mozart’s Concerto No. 2 First Movement: Allegro Aperto by memory at a concert that followed. Her goal is to play in a professional symphony in the future. Elisa’s grade point average and test scores constitute tangible evidence of her educational accomplishments, and attest to the fact that Elisa can pursue a major in any field of study and succeed. Janie Hickok Siess, a musical colleague of Elisa stated, “If Elisa pursues a career in music, she is destined to become a world-class flutist.”
Whether they study science or art, psychology or humanities, we trust these gifted learners to lead the way in resolving future problems facing our communities and our nation through the talents we are nurturing at present; they deserve support from all of us and we benefit as well.

Gifted Student STAR* Grant

Amount of Grant/Award: Up to $500.00

History:

The Gifted Student STAR Grant was created to foster the love of learning in Gifted Students. It is meant to “Support, Teach, Achieve and Realize success beyond the classroom by gifted learners.

Purpose:

Gifted Student Grants are intended to assist gifted students to excel in an area of interest or achievement. Grants are typically awarded to help finance:

• an original project which holds promise for the advancement of learning or contributes to a field of endeavor, or
• an instructional opportunity not available in the applicant’s school district.

Eligibility:

Students are eligible if they are currently enrolled in a California gifted and talented program and will continue to participate in it for the duration of the intended project or instructional opportunity. These awards will not be given for post-high-school work.

The following students received up to $500.00 STAR grants each to assist them with their projects:

Madison Womack, a sixth grade student at Monterey Road Elementary School in Atascadero, California attended the People-to-People forum in Washington D.C. to develop leadership skills and promote peace and friendship with other participants.

Alexander Ellenberg is 13 years old and attends Horner JHS in Fremont California. He used his grant to develop a directory listing of games that provide educational value after game play. This directory is for parents and students.

Amber Harbottle attends school at Atascadero JHS and is 12 years old. She is pursuing instruction in oboe in hopes of improving skills and qualifying for the Honor Band. She is a 6th grade student and wants to be sure she is prepared and ready to compete with the older students. She will also invite friends and family to the Honor Band concerts.

Vivian Stoneking is an eleven-year-old student at Durham school in Fremont, California. Vivian used the grant to attend YMCA Camp Campbell Outdoor Science School. She is very interested in all aspects of science. The curriculum at the camp encompassed Ecosystems, Endangered Species, Energy, environmental health and other topics of interest to her.

Ben Wallgren is 13 and attends Van Duzen Elementary School in Mad River, California. Ben attended the University of California, Irvine’s summer Gifted Students Academy. The program provided opportunities to learn things beyond his mountain community. He took a full load and lived in the dorm on campus during his stay.

Natalia Rubio is 8 years old and lives in San Jose, California. Natalia used her grant to attend Camp Galileo where she studied Egyptian civilizations and Amusement Park science. Natalia’s list of activities was very enriching and filled with new learning.

Research and Development

In addition, the Foundation may authorize and grant funding to support research and development projects approved for by the bylaws and the Foundation’s Board of Directors.

Recently, the Foundation granted The University of Southern California $30,000 to study the early identification of Pre-K-Grade 2 gifted youngsters. This grant was received as a gift to the University which means that all funds will be used for research, and the University will not deduct operating costs from the amount granted. This project is being conducted under the leadership of Dr. Sandra Kaplan, Professor of Clinical Instruction at University of Southern California.

The California Foundation for Gifted Education is a non-profit foundation and all donations are tax-deductible. The Foundation was started by the California Association for the Gifted to make a positive difference in the lives of gifted children and youth by generating funds to support research and development, scholarships, and gifted education projects. All funds are distributed to meet the goals of the foundation. In this particular financial downturn, the Foundation is following the advice of nonprofit leaders all over the country. That advice is to continue with small grants, keep our name familiar to our public and be cautious in expenditures. The Foundation is doing just that.

The Foundation thanks CAG and our many donors for their belief in our mission and for supporting our youngsters, parents, and teachers. The Foundation continues to conduct a state approved raffle at the annual CAG conferences, solicit donations in various publications, and accept donations in honor of special people.

We believe that gifted learners—like all students—deserve an appropriate academic education with differentiated curriculum, and respect for their individual needs and characteristics. The payoff for society is that by providing opportunities for growth, these gifted and talented youngsters become our best bet for problem solving in our increasingly complex world community. The Foundation looks forward to many more grants to further the work that CAG began back in the early 1960’s.

Please visit www.cfge.org for more information.

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Judith Roseberry has been a teacher, principal, and consultant for many years. She is past president of CAG, Orange County Council for Gifted, and active in SENG and other groups supporting the cause of gifted youngsters and their families and their teachers. Judith has served as a consultant around California, across the United States and in other countries. She is the mother of two grown gifted young women. Judith is retired from Garden Grove USD but not retired from the advocacy for gifted young learners. She is especially interested in social and emotional development and improving family interaction and understanding of the needs of the children and young adults in our lives.
A Lack of Commitment to Talent Development
A Half-Century After Winning the Space Race, Our Nation’s Competitiveness is at Risk

Despite pleas from leaders in business, industry, and government calling for a renewed national commitment to developing our most talented students, many states are focusing little to no attention or resources toward this purpose. In the two years since the previous State of the States in Gifted Education report, the consequences of continued neglect of our most talented students have become even clearer:

• U.S. students continue to lag behind other nations on a host of international tests in math, science and reading.
• The achievement gap between high-ability minority and low-income students and their non-minority peers is widening.
• The nation continues to rely heavily on foreign-born talent, particularly in demanding math and science fields.
• While evidence of the neglect of our most capable students has increased, our collective resolve to address it in a comprehensive and meaningful manner has diminished.

The sole federal program for gifted students was eliminated in 2011, leaving not a single federal education dollar to address the learning needs of advanced students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. States continue to address gifted education in a highly uneven and fragmented manner, leaving many students without access to appropriately challenging curriculum. And although 13 states are unable to provide data on the ethnicity of gifted and talented students, the data received indicates gaps in identifying and serving gifted students from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds.

The data collected in the biannual State of the States survey and highlighted here offer a snapshot of state policies and practices affecting gifted and talented learners in the 2010-2011 school year. Forty-four (44) states and 1 territory responded to the survey. Following are key findings from the report.

WHAT THE DATA TELL US: A DISTURBING LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY

States are not held accountable by the federal government for the academic performance of their high-achieving students, which has contributed to a climate of neglect. This lack of accountability means too many states fail to collect and report data on how these learners are faring in school and to gather details on the programs and services designed to meet their needs.

• 14 states do not collect information about students in the state who are identified locally as gifted and talented.
• 20 states do not monitor district programs for gifted and talented students.
• Only 17 states have 1 or more full-time staff members at the state education agency dedicated to gifted education; 27 states have entirely part-time gifted education staff. In 31 states, the staff has responsibility for programs and projects not specific to gifted education.
• Only 10 states publish an annual report on gifted and talented education; another 5 publish this information as part of a larger report.

LIMITED SUPPORT FOR HIGH-POTENTIAL AND HIGH-ABILITY STUDENTS

The responsibility for providing and funding gifted education services across the country rests with states and local school districts. Even in the states that require students be identified and/or served, service access, frequency, and type of services varies widely and often depends solely on the commitment of the local district. These variations lead to disparities in how the needs of gifted students are met.

• Of the 36 reporting states, 10 provided $0 in state funds to support gifted education in 2010-11, another 4 states spent less than $1 million.
• 15 states make a greater investment in gifted students by spending $10 million or more in state funds.
• Since the last State of the States report, 14 states have reduced state funding for gifted education.
• 12 states require district to have administrators for gifted education, yet only 4 states require them to have certification in gifted and talented education.
• 41 states define giftedness but 8 states do not require local districts to follow the state definition.

TEACHERS UNPREPARED TO MEET STUDENTS’ NEEDS

Well-trained professionals are indispensable to identify and properly serve high-potential and high-achieving learners. Without trained teachers and program administrators, even signif-
cant investments in other resources and services may fail to attain meaningful and sustained results. Despite this connection, the majority of teachers did not receive coursework on the nature and needs of gifted students in their college preparation programs. Additionally, training in gifted education identification and teaching methods is not widely required through in-service professional development courses, even for teachers working in specialized programs for gifted students. As a result, most gifted and talented children, who spend the majority of their time in the regular education classroom, are taught by teachers who are not trained to meet their needs.

- Only 6 states require all teachers to receive pre-service training in gifted and talented education.
- 24 states do not require gifted and talented credentials for professionals in specialized gifted and talented programs.
- General education teachers in 36 states are not required to have any training on the nature and needs of gifted and talented students at any point in their careers.
- Only 5 states require annual professional development for teachers in specialized gifted and talented programs, 26 states do not require it, and 12 leave it to the local school district.

A PATCHWORK COLLECTION OF SERVICES

Despite mandates for service in 26 states, most states leave important decisions to local districts. The result is a crazy quilt collection of services and inconsistency from district to district and even school house to schoolhouse within districts. While quality gifted education programs do exist, lack of accountability and the reliance on local funds makes these programs vulnerable to changes in local leadership and economic conditions.

- Gifted children receive the majority of their education in the regular classroom setting where most teachers have little to no specialized training in gifted education.
- Only 16 states require districts to accept gifted identification decisions from other districts in the state.
- 7 states permit students to enter kindergarten earlier than the state cut-off age, but 10 states do not allow the practice; 24 leave the decision to districts.
- 16 states provide public residential high schools for math and science, 2 for the humanities, and 11 for the fine and performing arts. 13 states provide funds for summer advanced programs called “governor’s schools”; and 14 states fund a virtual high school.
- Only 8 states have state policies that specifically permit academic acceleration; the rest leave the decision to the local school district.

A CALL TO ACTION

Our collective failure to prioritize the development of our most talented students is a crisis for the nation, one that looms larger with each passing school year as students languish unchallenged. It may not be as noticeable as a daily decline in the stock market or uptick in the unemployment rate, but the consequences of failing to address it in a meaningful manner right now are just as grave and reach far into the future.

The nation has a clear choice. We can continue to discount the scope of the problem in the face of voluminous data and expert recommendations. Or we can commit ourselves to a systematic process of identifying and cultivating our most talented students, both those we already recognize and those who remain to be discovered through proper identification and appropriate services. This systematic solution must begin with state and district accountability for the progress of their top-performing students. It must be implemented by well-trained teachers, administrators and other school personnel, and must be funded to the greatest extent possible. Educators at all levels must commit to exploring innovative and cost-effective strategies that will ensure a pipeline of excellence to meet the nation’s needs now and in the future.

NATIONAL ADVOCACY EFFORTS

NAGC advocates on behalf of gifted and talented children before the Congress and the executive branch on a range of issues including teacher preparation, accountability for student learning, equity issues, and funding for research and services for gifted learners.

NAGC members and the general public may join these efforts by becoming part of NAGC’s Legislative Action Network, a grassroots outreach program, to increase awareness of the needs of gifted children through local media efforts and direct contact with Members of Congress.

Visit http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=3642 to learn more and to join. Visit the “Legislative Update” section of the NAGC website to learn more about NAGC’s federal legislative agenda and how you can help. We also have compiled some “how to” advocacy strategies in the NAGC online advocacy toolkit.

Visit the “Myths about Gifted Education” pages of the NAGC website for information helpful to rebut harmful myths about gifted students and gifted education.

NAGC POLICY RESOURCES

NAGC has several publications to assist state and local advocates with key policy and practice issues. Visit the NAGC website at www.nagc.org for the following:

- 2010–2011 State of the States in Gifted Education (Report and data available on flash drive) — $22.00/$20.00
- A Guide to State Policies in Gifted Education CD-ROM — $9.00/$10.00
- Guidelines for Developing an Academic Acceleration Policy (downloadable .pdf)
- Position papers on key topics (www.nagc.org)
- Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards (www.nagc.org)
- NAGC, Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards: A Guide To Planning And Implementing High-Quality Services — $39.95/$35.95

This report was reprinted with the kind permission of the National Association for Gifted Children, whose headquarters are located at 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 1001, Washington, D.C. 20005 Telephone: (202) 785-4268, www.nagc.org.
Barack Obama has apparently committed blasphemy. In an interview in Florida on Sept. 29, he dared to say that America had gotten “soft.” The denunciations have come in fast and furious from the right. Mitt Romney, Rick Perry, Eric Cantor and the Wall Street Journal editorial page are all shocked—that the President could say such a thing. “America is the greatest nation in the world,” Cantor declared. Romney concocted a confusing metaphor about America carrying Obama on its shoulders, but his basic point was the same. Now, if you watch the clip, here’s what the President said: “The way I think about it is, you know, this is a great, great country that had gotten a little soft, and we didn’t have that same competitive edge that we needed over the last couple of decades. We need to get back on track.” Isn’t this self-evidently true? Isn’t this what conservatives have been saying for decades?

The evidence on the topic is pretty clear. The U.S. is slipping, by most measures of global competitiveness. It has dipped slightly in the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) rankings to No. 5, behind Sweden, Singapore, Finland and Switzerland. But the WEF rankings are based, in good measure, on surveys—polls of CEOs and the like. Other studies, using hard data, show America slipping further behind. The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation finds that in category after category—actual venture-capital funding, research and development—the U.S. has dropped well behind countries like Japan, South Korea and Sweden. The foundation measures 44 countries and regions on their efforts to improve their competitiveness over the past decade. The U.S. comes in next to last.

Perhaps the most crucial measure of our ability to compete in a global economy is our educational attainment, especially in science, math and engineering. A generation ago, America had the highest percentage of college graduates in the world. Today we’re ninth and falling. The WEF report ranks the U.S. a stunning 51st in science and math education. If a willingness to study science, math and engineering is an indication of being willing to work at hard stuff, there is no question that we are going soft. In 2004 only 6% of U.S. degrees were awarded in engineering, half the average for rich countries. In Japan it’s 20%, and in Germany it’s 16%. In 2008–09 there were more psychology majors than engineering majors in America and more fitness-studies majors than physical-sciences majors.

The great scholar Daniel Bell once summed up the essence of the Protestant ethic that had spawned industrial civilization: delayed gratification. The ability to save and invest today for a better tomorrow has been at the heart of every society’s leap from poverty to plenty. The U.S. was a country marked by this ethic. In the 1950s, household debt was just 34% of disposable income; today it is 115%. Then, the government made massive investments in research, development, infrastructure and education. Today, spending in all those areas is declining. Infrastructure and R&D spending are each down by a full percentage point of GDP. Federal funding for the physical sciences fell 54% over the 25 years since 1970 and has continued to fall. Tom Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum point out in their new book that 30 years ago, 10% of California’s general revenue went to higher education—and the result was the crown jewel of American public education, the University of California system. Just 3% went to prisons. Today, 11% goes to prisons and 8% to higher education, a number that is dropping fast. There are now about as many Americans who work in the prison business as in auto manufacturing.

Federal, state and local governments now spend less of their money investing for the future. Health care and pensions are devouring budgets everywhere, and whatever their virtues, it is difficult to mark them as producing a more competitive society. The federal government spends $4 on every adult over 65, compared with $1 on every child under 18. That is a statement about our priorities, favoring consumption over investment, the present over the future, ourselves over our children.

Conservatives used to believe in confronting hard truths, not succumbing to comforting fairy tales. Some still do. In a bracing essay in the National Review, Peter Thiel, the co-founder of PayPal and a politically active libertarian, describes how America has, well, gone soft. He notes that median wages have been stagnating for decades and argues that the country’s innovation culture has been corroded by a widespread search for “easy progress” and quick fixes. “In our hearts and minds,” Thiel writes, “we know that desperate optimism will not save us.” So when you hear someone like Eric Cantor recite one of these feel-good mantras (“U.S.A., No. 1!”), think of that well-chosen phrase: desperate optimism._

Editor’s note* This article first appeared in the October 27, 2011 issue of Time magazine, p. 26; it is also available at www.fareedzakaria.com.

FARIEED ZAKARIA is an Indian-American journalist and author. From 2000, he was a columnist for Newsweek and editor of Newsweek International. In 2010 he became Editor-At-Large of Time magazine. He is also the host of CNN’s “Fareed Zakaria GPS,” and a frequent commentator and author about issues related to international relations, trade and American foreign policy.
Responding to the Instruction or Intervention Needs of Gifted Students

My husband and I sat down to adjust our budget based on a new set of expenses and income. We began by listing the non-negotiable items (housing, utilities, financial obligations…) and then began brainstorming all the items we would like to have. Our wishes far exceeded our resources, so we prioritized and adjusted, and ended up with a budget that allows us all the necessities and a few luxuries.

The following Monday morning, I visited with some of the GATE teachers in our district, and found that the “economy” of a data-driven, responsive education was very similar to the budgeting process for our home. We have limited time and resources in public school. Our wish list for students is actually longer than our wishes for “things” at home, but with some creative problem solving, we find ways to thrive.

This lesson can extend to students who need to set goals and priorities, examining the cost of an activity in terms of time, energy, emotional impact, opportunity cost, and benefits both intrinsic and tangible.

THE ECONOMY OF MULTI-POTENTIALITY IN GIFTED STUDENTS

Multi-potentiality is a common phenomenon in gifted students. These students are often interested and talented in several disciplines, and might have difficulty budgeting time and resources for each of their varied interests. The lesson presented in this article applies an inquiry model that is integral to teacher induction in California: Create an inquiry question, Plan, Implement, Reflect, and Apply. It is a lesson that can be used at home or at school to help students organize and manage a 24-hour day when we’d like to have 48 or 72 hours to squeeze in all of our interests.

QUESTION

The first step in budgeting time and energy is to create a question that needs to be answered or identify a problem that needs to be solved. When children are taught to identify their own questions or problems, they develop a sense of ownership, and recognize that the question and resolution(s) or solution(s) are relevant because the question is important.

As parents and teachers, encourage your children and students to identify and articulate their own questions or problems. Begin with simple tasks that develop the habit of questioning. For example, when you get a new puzzle, try asking what the problem is that needs to be solved. While it may seem obvious that the problem is that I need to form a picture by fitting pieces of a puzzle together, the more sophisticated questioner might ask, “What strategy might I use to sort the pieces?” Shel Silverstein’s poem “Picture Puzzle Piece” contemplates fantastic possibilities presented by a puzzle piece.

For my dad, questions were stated as problems to solve. If I ever made the mistake of saying, “I’m bored,” my dad would say, “What is the problem you need to solve? Are you saying that you are frustrated by a mindless task, or are you disengaged because you haven’t found an entry point?” From there, he would tell me fascinating things that caused me to want to major in that field, and once engaged, the tasks were no longer tedious.

If my answer was, “There’s nothing to do,” he would turn it into a problem statement. “There are many things to do, but I haven’t figured out yet what they are. What are some of the possibilities that will be both stimulating and engaging?” But once my dad invested himself in any process, it became a mandated activity. We had to brainstorm many possibilities of things to do, prioritize, execute the plan, and then report back on whether or not that activity had been stimulating and successful, and what new questions had arisen out of that situation.

Mom usually engaged in similar questioning and problem-solving conversations with me as a small child, but “I’m bored” was her pet peeve, and if I made the mistake of saying it, this was the one problem she would solve for me. She always had a long list of things to do, and never hesitated in sharing some of those tasks with any of us who couldn’t figure out how to keep ourselves occupied.

PLAN

After you know your question or problem, you begin to find alternative options for the answer or solution. Using criteria, you choose one possible answer to try. Going back to the puzzle scenario, the student launches an inquiry: “What strategy might I use to begin.” The plan might include:
1) Group pieces by color
2) Gather all the pieces with a straight edge and begin on the sides
3) Grab a random handful of pieces and see if they fit together

In my work with teacher induction, the plan takes a long time. Teachers consider different pedagogies to meet a variety of student needs. Often, there are students who struggle with language and learning in the same class as students who were beyond proficiency in all standards before the first day of school. Often, the answer to an inquiry is not a simple list of strategies, but rather an elegant intertwining of multiple strategies in one fluid motion that meet each student in their personal zone of proximal development.

By the time they reach adolescence, gifted students should be able to engage in a similar complexity of planning and implementation, but those plans build on simple experiences early in life and add complexity a few steps at a time. There is a common misconception that gifted students are born with skills like questioning and problem solving. While it is true that many gifted students make huge leaps to understanding or create personal protocols that are far more efficient and productive than anything externally imposed, most of those protocols build on prior experiences, and are facilitated with structured activities aimed at systematic planning based on a variety of possible solutions.

When I was in Texas, our school participated in Future Problem Solving and Community Problem Solving. Those programs teach students to identify a problem, then brainstorm a list of at least twenty possible solutions. Students categorize their solutions, and then elaborate on the list by looking for new categories or additional solutions within the existing groups of ideas. From those multiple ideas, students prioritize by evaluating the list against criteria. For example, students might consider which idea provides the most challenge within the confines of emotional and physical safety, which idea has most positive impact on others, which is the most effective or efficient, or which is easiest to implement.

Some people plan best with an outline, while others would rather use a mind map or story board. In a mind map, the problem would go in the center of a page with possible solutions branching off in different directions. Details about each solution attach to the solution “balloon.”

A storyboard is similar to a mind map, but tends to use images in a sequence. Many students plan effectively with this graphic organizer, especially if each episode or event is on a sticky note, or even index cards that can be edited and shuffled.

Finally, create the criteria against which you will evaluate the project. Record the specific goals for the answer, solution, or project you are planning, along with the criteria for evaluating those goals.

Once the student has articulated the question and developed a plan to answer it, it’s time to implement. For some gifted students, the implementation stage can be paralyzing. Many of these students experience perfectionism, which Dr. James Webb describes as “driven pursuit of unrealistically high goals, with intense stress and suffering if one’s goals are not met.”

This is where the economy of time plays its most important part. In a recent California Association for the Gifted Teacher Institute, Dr. Sandra Kaplan suggested a time management tool that has been very effective for many of our gifted students. In a graph, use horizontal lines to plot the budgeted amount of time for an activity. After the activity, use vertical lines to show the actual time that the activity took, and then reflect.

**REFLECT**

After the question is answered or the problem is solved, reflect on your process. Using the time graph that compares budgeted time to actual time, look for discrepancies. If there is a difference in the plan and the implementation, ask yourself why there is a difference.

If the implementation took longer than expected, what caused the delay? Did you organize your time, space, and materials efficiently? Did you procrastinate? Did your extra time cause you to have deeper insights into the problem? Are you happy that you spent extra time on this project?

If the implementation took less time than expected, analyze the results to be sure your product has the level of excellence that you
targeted. If it’s a great project that just took less time, recognize and celebrate the factors that saved time!

One effective way to reflect on a project is to use a series of plus (+) and delta (D) to indicate which elements went well, and which ones you will change as you apply the learning from this task to future endeavors.

**APPLY**

In this lesson, or cycle of inquiry, you have completed several steps:

- **Ask** a question or pose a problem that needs to be answered or solved.
- **Plan** a pathway that will lead to the answer or solution.
- Implement the plan, budgeting time so that all the tasks in your busy day can be managed effectively.
- **Reflect** on the successes of this plan, and the goals for future plans.

After the reflection, it is important to apply the learning from this project to the next challenge you decide to take. This step begins with a new question, a plan that is implemented and evaluated.

Public schools struggle with dwindling resources and increasing demands. We watch as teachers and administrators add students and responsibilities to already daunting case loads. Students, too, struggle with dwindling time and energy in an age where there are more activities and passions than there are days in the week or hours in a day. This article encourages you to be deliberate in the way you spend that most precious resource, time.

**REFERENCES**

Kaplan, S. California Association for the Gifted: Teacher Institute. 2009


BETH LITRELL, M.Ed. is the Coordinator for BTSA Induction and Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) in the San Mateo-Foster City School District in California. She has worked with gifted students and their teachers for 26 years. She serves as Associate Editor for Curriculum & Instruction for the Gifted Education Communicator.

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**“QUICK TIPS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS”**

Engage your children / students in conversation! This article challenges students to:

- Pose questions and problems: Asking questions is a habit of mind that can be developed with practice. One way to practice is by asking the “five w’s + h:”
  - Who made the first ___? Who might use it? Who benefits from this idea, and is there a “who” that loses something because of it?
  - What is the significance of ___? What are the details? What is the underlying concept?
  - When did it happen? When should we use this, and when should we avoid it?
  - Where did the idea come from? Where, in geographic context, did the idea originate?
  - Why?*
  - How did ideas converge to make this possible? How will we solve the problem of ___? How do you know that ___?
  - “Why?” is my favorite question, and I have decided to leave it open to your own exploration.

**PLAN**

- Brainstorm some possible ways of approaching the problem
  - Make an outline or a list
  - Create a storyboard or mind map (use removable note pads or index cards so that ideas can easily be edited or rearranged)
- Implement the plan
  - Manage your time by planning how much time you intend to spend on each task.

**REFLECT**

- Was my plan implemented efficiently and effectively?
- What went well? What will I change next time?
- Apply by generating a new question!
What are the economics of giftedness? That was my first question this issue, having never approached giftedness from this perspective before. A quick trip to one of my favorite blogs provided my first answer. Gifted Phoenix's Blog post, “The Economics of Gifted Education,” giftedphoenix.wordpress.com/2010/06/27/the-economics-of-gifted-education, details the lack of research into the economics of giftedness. More importantly, Tim explains why it matters:

**WHY THIS MATTERS**

The key conclusion I want to draw is that—now we are in recession and there is heavy pressure on public expenditure—G&T education is at great risk of being cut because it is wrongly believed to be an unnecessary extra. This would be an excellent time to accumulate the research evidence to disprove that belief. So when, for example, US senators attempt to remove Javits Program funding, the gifted lobby is equipped with sound economic arguments and calculations to show why this would be so shortsighted. GP

More interesting to us is Gifted Phoenix’s next post, “The Economics of Gifted Education: Smart Fraction Theory,” giftedphoenix.wordpress.com/2010/06/28/the-economics-of-gifted-education-smart-fraction-theory, which explains more of the researched-driven conclusions in the economics of giftedness:

- Extending the quantity of schooling does not necessarily improve human capital and therefore economic growth,
- Schooling cannot be considered alone; genetics and environment play a role, so we must assess improvements in cognitive school on international comparisons such as the TIMSS,
- Cognitive skills impact personal earnings and therefore economic growth in both developing and developed countries,
- Modeling shows that a 40-point improvement from the mean TIMSS scores in math, science and reading would create a 5% improvement in GDP over 20 years,
- Improvements in top-end performance and in average performance have separate and complementary effects on economic growth, according to the model.

A follow-up study compared a 10% improvement in those students 100 points below the mean to those 100 points above the mean. In this comparison, the 10% improvement in the higher performing group had 4 times the positive impact on economic growth than a similar improvement in the lower performing group.

What does this mean to us? As a society, this economic downturn could be improved by improving our national performance in academics, particularly amongst the higher performing students. Yet our leaders’ reaction to our country’s economic struggles in no less than 14 U.S. states and the federal government is to reduce or eliminate programs that support our most able learners. NAGC 2010–2011 State of the States in Gifted Education: National Policy and Practice Data, nagc.org/stateofthestatesreport.aspx. Is this what we want to do to our economy?

**SOME SOLUTIONS**

What can we do to improve our gifted students’ education, TIMSS test performance, and ultimately their contribution to our nation’s
economy? We’ve already learned what doesn’t work: teaching to the test. Students who learn only specific answers to discrete problems are not prepared to face the infinite challenges of their futures. We need to educate students to face a future that hasn’t even been invented yet. To do this, we need novel ideas for education.

Consider the following resources and new-fangled approaches to education:

**THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM**

Why do kids sit in the classroom and learn, then go home and practice alone via their homework? Is this the best model for education, or just a habit we’ve gotten into through decades of practice? The Flipped Classroom, mindshift.kqed.org/2011/09/the-flipped-classroom-defined, turns the traditional model on its head. Kids learn at home, using computer-based lectures, tutorials, and online discussions. In the classroom, they practice what they’ve learned through labs, activities, discussions, debates and other group interactions. Those who struggle with the instructional topic spend time individually or in smaller groups with the teacher.

In the Flipped Classroom, we maximize the together-time of the classroom, the instructional capability of the teacher, and minimize the number of students who spend their classroom time waiting for everyone else to catch up!

The results of the Flipped Classroom in research are astounding. Before the flip, half of the students in the researched group failed freshman English, 44% failed freshman math. Over 700 students were referred for disciplinary problems. After the flip, less than 20% failed English, and 13% failed math. More impressively, only 249 students were referred for disciplinary problems, another huge benefit of the Flipped Classroom model!

**KHAN ACADEMY**

Sal Khan, now with support from The Gates Foundation and Google’s Project 10 to the 100, has created over 2700 10- to 20-minute conversational-style YouTube videos on topics including math topics, science topics including biology, chemistry and physics, and humanities including finance, American civics, history and art history, plus test-prep for SATs, competition math tests and more. And they are all available completely free at khanacademy.org.

Khan Academy videos may be used in many ways. Many of the videos are assembled into playlists covering an entire course. Or videos may be viewed individually to reinforce a specific topic. Khan Academy allows a teacher to register all his students and follow their progress and track their success through the videos and exercises. Khan Academy is also a great resource to the Flipped Classroom.

Concerned about the quality of Khan Academy content? So is Sal Khan! Videos are reviewed before and after publication. Khan notes videos that cause folks to lose attention and stop viewing before completion, or videos that leave viewers less than prepared for the practice exercises, and he improves them. And nearly 90% of Khan videos are created by Sal Khan himself, for consistently high quality. Khan Academy is constantly improving its content for the student!

If you are saying, “Sounds great but my school blocks YouTube,” you should know that all Khan Academy videos are mirrored at archive.org/details/khanacademy. It’s all free to you, too.

Parents, teachers and administrators, “Get Started with Khan Acad-
I’ll bet I’m far from the only geek out there who thinks playing some-love-to-math-lovers.html, the official Google Search blog. Need more than one equation? No problem! Read more box, and Google will return the TI-93-esque graph of the equation. Literally type a function into the Google search box, google.com, is a great new addition to Google Calculator, and Google will return the TI-93-esque graph of the equation. Need more than one equation? No problem! Read more.

**GOOGLE GRAPHING CALCULATOR**

Did you forget your graphing calculator today? Google Graphing Calculator, google.com, is a great new addition to Google search results. Literally type a function into the Google search box, and Google will return the TI-93-esque graph of the equation. Need more than one equation? No problem! Read more on Inside Search, insidesearch.blogspot.com/2011/12/showing-some-love-to-math-lovers.html, the official Google Search blog. I’ll bet I’m far from the only geek out there who thinks playing with a graphing calculator is fun!

**DIGITAL DIALECTS**

Digital Dialects, digitaldialects.com, offers fun language learning games in 66 languages (so far!), from Afrikaans to Zazaki, Dutch to Thai, plus all the traditional U.S. school-taught languages. Practice your phrases, numbers, useful words, spelling, verb conjugation and more. Many quizzes have an audio component, too. Digital Dialects is a great way to introduce a wide variety of new languages, practice along with your foreign language instruction, or experiment with related languages. For non-native English speakers, there’s even a set of English games presented in English, French or Japanese! Parlez-vous Français?

Carolyn Kottmeyer is the director and founder of the award-winning Hoagies’ Gifted Education Page, hoagiesgifted.org, and Hoagies’ Kids and Teens Page, hoagieskids.org. Carolyn can be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HoagiesGifted or on Twitter @HoagiesGifted.
One of my favorite moments in Stanley Kubrick’s 1968 classic film, 2001: A Space Odyssey, features Dr. Heyward Floyd placing a videophone call home to his daughter from Space Station V. Ever since seeing this scene, I have marveled at what it would be like to live in a world where one would be able to not only hear, but also to see, the person they were conversing with. While we may not have achieved the efficiency in space travel featured in 2001, we have more than surpassed the capability that was promised with the advent of the videophone, thanks to tools such as Skype, Google Talk, and Apple’s Facetime.

Skype, www.skype.com, started as a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service in 2003, and in December of 2005 video capabilities were introduced. Since that time, other services have attempted to emulate the features and functionality of Skype. For the purpose of this column, Skype will be used as a general term to encompass a variety of other similar tools.

I am sure that if you are reading this, you’ve heard of Skype. However, I believe many educators haven’t thought much about how powerful this tool can be in their teaching. According to a 2010 Pew Internet Survey, http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Video-chat.aspx, only 19% of American adults have ever tried video calling. To encourage use of this powerful and free tool, I would like to offer some suggestions about how Skype can be used in education and provide you with tips to help ensure success.

**SKYPE WITH AN EXPERT**

While it is becoming increasingly difficult to take our students on field trips, thanks to technology, we have the ability to bring the world into our classrooms. As you are studying a particular topic, I encourage you to contact universities, research centers, and corporations to make connections with experts in that field. While these experts may not be able to travel to your school to meet with your students, Skype will allow scientists to speak to your students without ever leaving the laboratory. I am consistently surprised at how willing individuals are to share their knowledge with a group of interested gifted students via Skype.

**ONLINE CONFERENCES**

I currently use Skype as a venue for conferences with my graduate students at East Carolina University. This allows me to have a face-to-face conference with my students regardless of our locations. You could use Skype as a means to conduct conferences with parents who are unable to attend in person or as part of your office hours; students who have their teacher’s Skype name are able to see when their teacher is online and available to answer any questions.

**VIRTUAL GROUP WORK**

When working in groups outside of class, students can meet on Skype for group discussions. Each group can decide when they are going to meet, and then submit the meeting time to their teacher. This gives their teacher the ability to drop into at least one of the group meetings to answer any questions they may have and to ensure that the students are on task.

**SKYPE FOR EDUCATION**

But what about ways to create connections beyond your classroom? Skype has created the Skype in the Classroom project, http://education.skype.com/. This is a collection of educators from around the world who are interested in forming partnerships with fellow educators. Approximately 20,000 teachers have already registered and over 1300 projects have been developed through the site. I encourage you to seek out fellow gifted educators from across the country and around...
the world. Many of the projects focus on literature discussions, language development, and cultural exchanges. I cannot imagine a better way for gifted students to learn about their own giftedness than by sharing their experiences with other gifted students in a variety of different settings. There is a great potential here that we are only now beginning to fully realize. Skype for Education has a search function that allows you to look for classes, guest speakers, or other teachers for collaboration. Also, you are able to search for a specific age range and topic of interest.

CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout my years of using Skype with my students and other teachers, I have realized that there are a great number of things that one should take into consideration in order to be successful.

Plan ahead. First, plan ahead! I cannot emphasize this one enough. Before you try this in class with your students, be sure to communicate with the other person that you are going to Skype. You will want to have a good idea of how the conversation will go before you start with a group of students. Be clear about your expectations and understand what the other person is expecting from the conversation.

Test run. Second, it is a great idea to schedule a test run. This will give you a chance to ensure that all of the technology is working correctly. It is much better to work out any difficulties during your planning time than when you have a group of excited students waiting to Skype. Spending five minutes ahead of time checking things out is worth your time in the long run.

Prepare questions ahead. Next, I have found that it is useful to have your students prepare questions ahead of time. There is nothing more awkward than having a group of gifted middle school students stare at another group of middle school students on camera and giggling at one another. By having your students prepared the experience will be much more rewarding.

Expect the unexpected. Finally, as with using any technology, expect the unexpected. Schools are very unpredictable places, and often schedules and technology do not work exactly the way we’d like. It is always a great idea to have a backup plan.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not address the fact that Skype may be blocked at your school. As with almost any technology, I want to believe that if you have a sound educational purpose for using Skype in the classroom your administration will give you permission to do so.

Part of our job as instructors is to prepare our students for living in a global society because they have to be able to talk with the world. Skype allows them to do this.

If you have any questions or other suggestions, just Skype me at brianhousand@gmail.com.

BRIAN HOUSAND teaches in the department of Curriculum and Instruction at East Carolina University. He earned a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut’s National Research Center, Gifted and Talented, with a dual emphasis in gifted education and instructional technology. He is currently exploring ways in which technology can enhance the learning environment and striving to define creative-productive giftedness in a digital age. His website is brianhousand.com and he can be reached at brianhousand@gmail.com.
When I was a 6th grade full-day GATE teacher in the 1980’s I would love to have had the resources of the web that we have today. Our curriculum was project-based and activity-oriented. My students often had the choice to differentiate the way they shared their knowledge of a subject: e.g., skits, plays, poems, and oral recitations. As tweens, however, they were often shy to present in front of each other. Videotaping was the newest technology. Students often taped themselves giving an oral presentation of their knowledge. However, they needed a video camera, VHS tapes, television, and someone to do the taping. Today, the same students could use Voki for Teachers and Parents (www.Voki.com) in their class, school lab, or home computer to create the same kind of presentation with many fewer resources needed. Voki is a free web tool. Students can create their own avatar and create an oral presentation that can be added to a website.

Last issue we talked about students creating their own website at Wikispaces. Voki presentations can be easily embedded in a Wiki-space or other class website and shared with the public or with a private group of invitees. In this issue, I will share ideas for using Voki in the classroom and at home. I will also share websites where Vokis have been used to make oral presentations in the classroom or presentations for the family to view. Check out my rendition of the Star Spangled Banner at my wikispaces, http://drbabs.wikispaces.com. By the way, I cannot sing, thus the spoken word.

Voki is a user-friendly, fun, and interesting application that is free to use. Students can create their own avatar, record their voice to make a presentation, and post it to a website. Voice recording can be done through the telephone, through a microphone connected to the computer, or through the computer’s internal microphone. Students can also choose one of Voki’s installed voices and enter the speaking through the keyboard.

Here is a rubric that can be used to evaluate a Voki presentation: http://web.me.com/catabohorquez/World_Languages/Samples_files/Speaking_Rubric.pdf

1. LESSON IDEAS

   Teachers: The Voki website has a whole set of lesson plans sorted by grade levels from K-college and by subject matter.

   Parents: The same lessons can be used by individual students at home to learn new subject matter or practice already learned subject matter.

2. VOKI CLASSROOM

Parents: Imagine sharing a holiday message with grandma and grandpa through a Voki. Grandparents are delighted to see and hear their grandchildren performing an oral presentation.

3. PRACTICE A FOREIGN LANGUAGE


4. SHARE A POEM OR STORY

Teachers: Use Voki to create presentations of poems or stories written by students during a writing lesson. All the student presentations can be posted on a class website and read by parents and the teacher. The teacher can also post a Voki for each child to hear the evaluation of the presentation.

Parents: Students can create a Voki of a poem or story they have created at home or at school. The presentation can be shared with grandparents and friends.

5. ROLE PLAYING

Teachers: Use Voki to create role-playing presentations. While studying historical figures or periods of history, allow students to select a famous character, research the character, and make a presentation of the character using Voki. Students should have fun creating the avatar of the character and then imitating the character’s voice using a quote from the historical figure.

Parents: Students can create television characters and favorite singers using Voki. Allow students to have fun creating an avatar and voice of their favorite TV star or singer. Students can ask their friends to view the Voki and guess the name of the person portrayed.

6. FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

Teachers: You cannot avoid it. Voki is on Facebook and Twitter. The Facebook site gives many good lesson ideas from teachers who use Voki. There are also discussions about problems and answers from the Voki folks: http://www.facebook.com/voki.

Parents: Allow your student to check out the Facebook Voki site. Students can post their Voki to Facebook or comment on something related to Voki using a Voki. Students can also share their own opinion of Voki and give ideas to teachers for Voki lessons.

7. BEGINNING OF THE YEAR OR SEMESTER INTRODUCTIONS

Teachers: Many students do not like to speak about themselves in front of the class. Allow students to create a Voki that introduces them to the other students. Aside from the usual name and age, require students to include interesting facts about themselves including interests, collections, sports played, hobbies, and places they have lived or traveled.

Parents: Allow students to create a Voki that introduces some interesting but little known facts about themselves to their family and friends. For gifted students, it is often difficult to find peers who share one’s passions. They might find new friends who share their interests through sharing Vokis.

8. VOICE A COLLABORATIVE STORY

Teachers: Begin with a Voki that starts a story created by the teacher or one of the students. Assign the students numbers. In turn, students listen to the previous Vokis and then add a Voki that continues the story. The last student must complete the story. Students should be directed to follow the elements of a good story: setting, characterization, sequence of plot, exposition, conflict, climax, and resolution.

Parents: Families can create a collaborative story about the history of their family. Every family member can create a Voki that includes the main elements of their own life. Family stories can be shared on a family website.

9. ASSIGN HOMEWORK OR GIVE INFORMATION

Teachers: Use Voki to give a homework assignment, project assignment, or lesson information. Students will be able to hear the teacher’s voice as they did in class to review the assignment or information as many times as needed. This is very useful for students who are absent or do not do a good job of getting the information during class.

Parents: Create a Voki to give your children chores or information about how to complete a home task. Children are more likely to get the tasks done if they hear your voice and can repeat the information. It saves you time and gives them a second chance to hear the information.

10. YOUTUBE AND VOKI

Teachers and Parents: Use YouTube to find videos that show ways to embed Vokis in websites and blogs. There are also videos showing how to start Voki, create the avatar, and ideas for using Voki. I found hundreds of videos that would be useful. Do not be afraid to allow students to use YouTube. One can find objectionable videos but most videos are very useful and helpful. I repaired my cell phone using a YouTube video. Schools are sometimes blocked by their spam filters from using YouTube. Students can use YouTube at home or on non-school smartphones and tablets.

Have fun with Voki. Send me the links to your student Vokis so I can use them for examples on my website. drbabs@starstream.net and www.drbabs.wikispaces.com.
Effective Program Practices for Underserved Gifted Students

By Cheryll M. Adams & Cecelia Boswell
Paperback, Waco,
paperback, $24.95, 114 pp.

REVIEWED BY
CHRISTINE HOENER

For many teachers who really want to engage the underserved gifted and talented learners, the major problem is that they simply don’t know how.

• What is an effective practice?
• How does it actually look?
• Will it really support my culturally, linguistically, educationally diverse (CLED) students

In this book, Adams and Boswell have laid solid foundational help for the teacher trying to meet the educational needs of these underserved populations. The first chapter sets the structure for the book; it explains the important effective practices of:

• differentiation
• acceleration
• enrichment

Each of these three processes, explained within its own chapter, gives the unpracticed teacher three detailed, informational bases from which to build.

Further, to their credit, Adams and Boswell have not forgotten some basic necessities such as classroom management, anchoring activities, and assessments.

The chapter on differentiation is an especially grounding chapter, in my opinion. Simply stated is the understanding that not all students learn content the same way. This is the overriding principle for every student; it needs careful consideration for our underserved Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) populations.

The authors underscore language, culture, ethnicity, interests, exceptionality, family background, and learning profiles as impacting the individual learner’s approach to the curriculum. As if this is not complex enough, add into the mix the learning characteristics of those students who are twice exceptional.

To save the conscientious teacher from being totally overwhelmed and giving up in exasperation, the authors save the day by carefully explaining and defining the major issues involved, followed by practical examples.

A superb addition that every teacher will appreciate is a complete unit of study, the structure of which is carefully laid out in Appendix A. From rationale to independent activities for high ability students, here is an example of how the earlier chapters issues would look in a unit, in this case “Inventors” and “Inventions.” The unit is spelled out day-by-day, lesson-by-lesson. Special resources like graphic organizers, which include checklists and exit cards, are included.

All in all, this book provides the teacher with a look at basic educational concerns around CLED students and some key elements in organizing meaningful, appropriate content for them.

CHRISTINE HOEHNTER is Associate Editor for Book Reviews for the Gifted Education Communicator. She is retired from the Glendale Unified School District program in southern California and can be reached at chrishoehner@yahoo.com.
10 Things NOT to Say to Your Gifted Child: One Family’s Perspective

By Nancy Heilbronner, Jennifer Heilbronner Munoz, Sarah Heilbronner, & Joshua Heilbronner

REVIEWED BY
MARGARET GOSFIELD

I would hesitate to create a book around a set of negatives—“things NOT to say.” And yet, the Heilbronners’ book turns out to be both positive and enjoyable to read. This book is essentially a series of story-telling events that serve as anchors for the issues Dr. Heilbronner chooses to discuss. The stories come from the author’s experiences in raising three gifted children, now adults. The children, in turn, become co-authors as they provide their own perspectives and insights about those same issues at the end of most chapters.

Dr. Heilbronner is well versed in gifted education; she earned her Ph.D. at the University of Connecticut under the leadership of Joe Renzulli and Sally Reis. She also taught gifted students for 10 years in elementary and middle schools. She now teaches at Western Connecticut State University, as well as researching and writing about gifted learners. She uses both her practical parenting experiences and her university research to provide today’s parents with important, practical guidelines.

The 10 sayings she focuses on are:

• You’re so smart…we love you!
• You’re gifted: this should be easy for you.
• Don’t be silly; there’s nothing to be afraid of.
• Do it because I said so.
• Why don’t you make more friends?
• No more questions!
• If you don’t get your grades up, no more dance lessons.
• Don’t you want to be an astronaut?
• If it’s too hard, then quit!
• Can’t you color inside the lines?

Through all aspects of parenting their gifted children, Dr. Heilbronner and her husband embraced a three-point philosophy, which she emphasizes and recommends to her readers.

1. Surround your child with unconditional love and a secure environment.
2. Respect the uniqueness that is within each child.
3. Identify and nurture your child’s talents.

Dr. Heilbronner recommends multiple resources for all chapters in the book. Also included are numerous tables and figures to illustrate and extend the writing, including specific steps in undertaking responses to gifted children. It is a very readable and practical book that I heartily recommend.

MARGARET GOSFIELD is the Acquisitions Editor for Gifted Education Communicator. She is retired as a teacher and coordinator of gifted programs for Ventura Unified School District in southern California.
Gifted Education Communicator

Gifted Education Communicator, the online journal of the California Association for the Gifted is published four-times per year: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Gifted Education Communicator features articles and columns by nationally known leaders in the field of gifted education. The GEC is produced as an 8.5x11 layout in both flash and pdf formats. Mechanical Specs: Submit art/copy as file or on disk in appropriate online formatting.

DISPLAY RATES

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ADVERTISING RATES

Closing Dates:
Spring - January 15 - Summer - April 15
Fall - July 15 - Winter - October 15

For information, contact:
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Parents and educators in the California Association for the Gifted (CAG) have been the principal supporters of gifted learners in California since 1966. The program benefits that gifted children enjoy today are a direct result of that support.

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Ten Reasons why you should be a Member of the California Association for the Gifted:

1. Your membership supports CAG’s work with the California department of Education and California’s legislators, to ensure that gifted education continues in California.

2. Your membership supports research and development, books, position papers, and other resources focusing on issues, policies, and practices that impact the education of gifted and talented students.

3. Your membership supports CAG’s Teacher Institutes, Parent Institutes, and a certificate program that teach theory and practice essential to the education of gifted students. The positive “spillover” effect for all students is well documented.

4. Your membership supports the volunteer services of parent and educator representatives in each region, who provide resources at a local level.

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