Serving Highly & Profoundly Gifted Learners
California Association for the Gifted

48th Annual CAG Conference

Major & Featured Presenters at CAG's 2010 Conference
Barbara Clark  Joseph Renzulli
Marcy Cokk  Judith Roseberry
Sandra Kaplan  Robin Schader
Sally Reis

Friday Optional Activities
The Friday Optional Activities all cost an additional fee and all occur at the same time so you can only sign up for one Friday activity. They are very popular and space is limited on each activity, so sign up early for best selection.

Pre-Conference (Optional)
FIRST VIEW OF NEW IDEAS IN GIFTED EDUCATION: RESPONDING TO ACADEMIC DIVERSITY
- Gifted Readers
- Gifted Children in Urban Settings
Participation in the Pre-Conference includes the opportunity to attend sessions with Sally Reis and Sandra Kaplan, current leaders in the field of gifted education. Included in the workshop will be practical strategies for teaching gifted students in diverse settings. Each attendee will receive two new publications authored by these featured speakers, Using the Parallel Curriculum Model in Urban Settings by Sandra Kaplan and Joyful Reading by Sally Reis.

Classroom Observations (Optional)
Visits to various school districts in and around Sacramento enable participants to see first hand a variety of appropriate curriculum options for gifted, talented, and high-achieving students. This year there are 2 elementary visits, 1 middle school visit, and 1 high school visit. Get full details on each visit at www.cagifted.org. These visits fill up quickly so sign up NOW to get your first choice.

Exhibit Hall
The exhibit hall has almost 100 booths with items of interest for parents and teachers of gifted students. It is open Friday, 2-7 pm, Saturday, 8 am - 6 pm, and Sunday, 8 am - 12 noon.

Silent Auction
California Foundation for Gifted Education will be holding a silent auction throughout the conference to raise money for scholarships, research and development, and educational projects. Be sure to stop by their booth in the exhibit hall. If you would like to donate an item for the auction, email Judith Roseberry at judithr11isol.com.

Team Discount Available
Save $250 by coming as a team. Details on the CAG website.

Sacramento Convention Center
1400 J Street, Sacramento

For more information and to register online for CAG's 48th Annual Conference, visit www.CAGifted.org.

General Sessions
There are two general sessions, one on Friday evening with Joe Renzulli and one on Saturday morning with Sally Reis.

Workshops
There will be a big selection of workshops during each of 9 different time periods from Friday at 4:00 pm until Sunday at 1:30 pm. The presenters have been selected from hundreds of proposals submitted this year.

PATHWAY TO AH-HA!
Follow the Pathway to AH-HA! in order to experience the GATE Standards in theory and practice. Examples of differentiating the curriculum from simple to complex will be part of your journey as you follow the pathway.

KEEPING GATE EDUCATION ALIVE
Sessions will be presented on topics that are helpful to keep gifted education alive during this economically challenging time.

Parents at the Conference
Parents of gifted children are encouraged to attend the full three-day conference beginning at 4:00 pm on Friday, March 5, and ending at the conclusion of Parents' Day at the Conference on Saturday, March 6th (included at no additional charge to those attending the entire conference.) Presentations of interest to parents are scheduled during ALL conference sessions. The Exhibit Hall and the Resource Room are open throughout the conference and offer a variety of resources.

PARENTS' DAY AT THE CONFERENCE——ONE-DAY ONLY——SUNDAY
Join with all other conference attendees on Sunday as we offer both the teacher and parent sessions simultaneously. Come early for a “first timer” session in the Resource Room during registration. Following the keynote session by Robin Schader, enjoy the tasty brunch and time to visit the Exhibit Hall. Afterwards, join us in sessions, workshops, meaningful discussion groups or networking with other parents. There will be opportunities to talk about advocating for your child, what a differentiated classroom might look like, and how to gain understanding on what the Standards for Gifted & Talented students mean in this climate of budget cuts. Parents are encouraged to stop by the Resource Room to pick up handouts, ask questions, view classroom artifacts, learn more about instructional strategies and resources or network with your regional representatives.
Serving Highly & Profoundly Gifted Learners

FEATURES

14 Highly Gifted, Vastly Ignored: The Compelling Case for Recognizing and Serving Our Most Able Children
   Jim Delisle

19 Highly Gifted, Highly Sensitive, and Highly Intense
   Susan Daniels

25 Davidson Institute for Talent Development: A Decade of Supporting our Nation’s Brightest Young Minds
   Davidson Institute Staff

27 The Highly/Profoundly Gifted Individual
   Robert Arthur Schultz

31 Lessons Learned from a Summer Residential Camp for Highly Gifted Students
   Sharon Dole & Lisa Bloom

PARENT TALK

7 Parenting Highly Gifted Children: Intense Demands, Intense Rewards
   Nancy M. Robinson

ADMINISTRATOR TALK

9 Beyond “Gifted”: Challenging Profoundly Gifted Students in Our Classrooms
   Carolyn R. Cooper

THE AMAZING BRAIN

12 Responding to the Profoundly Different Brains of Highly Gifted
   Barbara Clark

HANDS-ON CURRICULUM

35 Educating the Highly Gifted: Downs and Ups
   Ann MacDonald & Jim Riley

CARPE DIEM

38 Highly What?
   Elaine S. Wiener

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

39 Integrative Education and Technology
   Beth Littrel

WEB WATCH

41 Serving Highly Gifted Children
   Carolyn Kottmeyer

BOOK SAVVY: CREATING LIFETIME READERS

44 Setting the Stage for Reading Beyond the Classroom: Strategies and Titles to Explore
   Susannah Richards

BOOK REVIEWS

47 Academic Advocacy for Gifted Children
   By Barbara Jackson Gilman

48 Living With Intensity
   By Susan Daniels & Michael Piechowski, Eds.

48 Exceptionally Gifted Children, 2nd Edition
   By Miraca U.M. Gross

3 From the Editor

4 Calendar of Conferences
   Cover photo by Dan Nelson.
Mara Gross, in her landmark study of highly and profoundly gifted children in Australia, charted out numbers and levels of giftedness as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>IQ range</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mildly (basically)</td>
<td>115–129</td>
<td>1:6–1:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately gifted</td>
<td>130–144</td>
<td>1:40–1:1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly gifted</td>
<td>145–159</td>
<td>1:1,000–1:1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptionally gifted</td>
<td>160–179</td>
<td>1:10,000–1:1million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profoundly gifted</td>
<td>180+</td>
<td>Fewer than 1:1 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The enormity of such numbers are difficult for me to grasp, but clearly the highly, exceptionally, and profoundly gifted children are a tiny minority even within the gifted population. Many of these children begin speaking by the age of 9 months and are reading at age 2. Most teachers may have only a single, or at most, a handful of such children in their entire career span of teaching. With so few children in this group, why should we care?

We need to care because these children are the most underserved children in our school systems. Most of them have been given (forced?) regular classroom work that is at levels several years below their tested ability and achievement. In sports that would be the equivalent of having the school’s star varsity basketball player practice with the school’s most uncoordinated P.E. student. It benefits neither party and creates unnecessary stress. Gross states, “It is surprising that extremely gifted students do not rebel more frequently against the inappropriate educational provision that is generally made for them” (Gross, 2004, p. 17).

I don’t know how many highly or profoundly gifted students I had during my twenty years of teaching gifted children. In the 1970s and 1980s there was very little information and almost no training in gifted education where I lived and taught. I’m afraid that I was guilty of assuming that the strategies and curriculum I used in my gifted classes were sufficient for all the students in them. I suspect this assumption continues widespread today.

However, it behooves educators and parents to make concerted efforts to learn to distinguish the different levels of giftedness because otherwise we will surely miss and overlook those who need differentiated instruction and affective understanding the most. Our authors in this issue give us a start in recognizing the nature and needs of this ignored group of highly gifted learners.

Our feature section begins with Jim Delisle’s essay, “Highly Gifted, Vastly Ignored: The Compelling Case for Recognizing and Serving Our Most Able Children.” He traces the origins of gifted education in this country to Leta Hollingworth and points out that advocates of gifted education at that time viewed these children from the vantage point of psychology. He maintains that “…highly gifted children have their most profound needs not in relation to curriculum, but in relation to overall adjustment in a world where they are, indeed, a tiny minority.” Delisle provides suggestions and food for thought for both parents and educators.

Susan Daniels follows with an article entitled, “Highly Gifted, Highly Sensitive, and Highly Intense,” in which she discusses the seemingly extreme sensitivities highly gifted children often embody. She delineates clearly the “overexcitabilities” defined by the Polish psychiatrist and psychologist Kazimierz Dabrowski: Psychomotor, Sensual, Intellectual, Imaginational, and Emotional.

Daniels points out that, “While the overexcitabilities are central to the highly gifted individual child’s self, identity, and developmental potential, they also bring with them behaviors that confound adults.” Her article includes specific strategies for parents and educators to encourage modulation (not elimination!) of their overexcitabilities to ease themselves and those around them.

The Davidson Institute for Talent Development has only been in existence since 1998 but already it has become a leading resource for highly gifted children and their advocates. The article, “Davidson Institute for Talent Development: A Decade of Supporting our Nation’s Brightest Young Minds,” prepared by its staff outlines the significant resources made available to highly gifted children. They invite you to visit their website which spells out in more detail all they have to offer.

Robert Schultz expands the discussion in his article, “The Highly/Profoundly Gifted Individual.” Of particular interest is a chart prepared by Dr. Schultz in which he specifies the tendencies and or behaviors associated with highly and profoundly gifted individuals, including descriptions of them as they might be observed in a classroom setting. The chart is designed as a reference to assist in recognizing and identifying these children.

Our final feature presents results of the experiences of highly and profoundly gifted children at a special summer camp held at Western Carolina University situated in the mountains of western North Carolina over the years 1958–2000. Known as “The Cullowhee Experience” the authors, Sharon Dole and Lisa Bloom, compiled the responses to a survey of participants concerning their thoughts about their camp experiences. The article includes samples of student responses in addition to presenting the themes that emerged from the study and their implications for classroom practices. The article is entitled, “Lessons Learned from a Summer Residential Camp for Highly Gifted Students.”

I would also like you to especially note this issue’s “Hands-on Curriculum” column. Authors Ann MacDonald and Jim Riley have decided this is their last column for the journal. I wish to express my thanks for the exemplary work they have shared with us over the years and to wish them well in their ensuing ventures.

—Margaret Gosfield
2010

JANUARY 9, 2010
New Jersey Association for Gifted Children
Pennsauken High School, Pennsauken, NJ
njagc.org

JANUARY 9 - 11, 2010
Hawaii Gifted Association
Marriott Ihilani Resort & Spa, HI
higifted.org

JANUARY 5 - 8, 2010
Torrance Center for Creativity & Talent Development
San José, Costa Rica
uga.edu/costarica/program

JANUARY 28 - 30, 2010
Utah Association for Gifted Children
Davis Conference Center, Layton, UT
uagc.org

FEBRUARY 3 - 5, 2010
Arizona Association of Gifted & Talented
Black Canyon Conference Center, Phoenix, AZ
arizonagifted.org

FEBRUARY 7 - 9, 2010
Illinois Association for Gifted Children
Chicago Marriott Downtown, Chicago, IL
iagcgifted.org

FEBRUARY 7 - 9, 2010
Minnesota Educators of the Gifted & Talented
Cragun's Resort, Brainerd, MN
megt.org

FEBRUARY 8 - 10, 2010
Kentucky Association for Gifted & Talented
Marriott Griffin Gate Hotel, Lexington, KY
ku.edu/kage

FEBRUARY 11 - 12, 2010
North Carolina Association of Gifted & Talented
Winston-Salem, NC
ncagt.org

FEBRUARY 19, 2010
Beyond Giftedness XVII
Center for the Arts, Arvada, CO
openpacecomm.com/

FEBRUARY 24 - 26, 2010
Arkansas Association for Gifted & Talented
Peabody Hotel, Little Rock, AR
agate-arkansas.org

FEBRUARY 26, 2010
Oklahoma Association of Gifted, Creative, & Talented
University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK
oagct.org

MARCH 4 - 5, 2010
New Jersey Association for Gifted Children
Mercer County Community College, West Windsor, NJ
njagc.org

MARCH 5 - 7, 2010
California Association for the Gifted
Convention Center, Sacramento, CA
cagifted.org

MARCH 10 - 12, 2010
National Curriculum Network
The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA
cfge.wm.edu

MARCH 11 - 13, 2010
Best Practices Institute
The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
curry.edschool.virginia.edu

MARCH 11 - 13, 2010
Weinfeld Education Group, LLC and AEGUS
University of Maryland, Shady Grove, Rockville, MD
richweinfeld.com/diamonds.html

MARCH 12, 2010
Georgia Association for Gifted Children
Regional conferences, various Georgia locations
gacg.org

MARCH 23 - 24, 2010
Ohio Association for Gifted Children
Hilton at Easton, Columbus, OH
oagc.com

APRIL 21 - 24, 2010
Council for Exceptional Children
Nashville, TN
cecsped.org

APRIL 22 - 24, 2010
Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education
Mars, PA
penngifted.org

APRIL 30 - MAY 2, 2010
Beyond IQ (BIO) Boston
Courtyard by Marriott, Billerica, MA
giftedconferenceplanners.org/Boston/

MAY 16 - 18, 2010
Wallace Research Symposium on Talent
University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/Research/

If your organization has a state or national event planned, please contact Ann MacDonald at: clan-macd@yahoo.com to list your information.
When I was first asked to write this article, I was more than flattered—flattered to even begin to believe that I, a total “work in progress,” was considered a “success story.” My feelings of flattery immediately turned to reluctance because, in my eyes, I am no success story by any stretch of the imagination. I always look at my life as evolving and changing; my success only lies within my willingness to adapt and grow and embrace change. This truly has been my saving grace over the past decade.

Right now I am in my second year of junior college at Glendale Community College. There I take a full academic workload including French, Anthropology, and English. I am the President of the Theatre Guild on campus, and currently I’m cast in the school play, “A Streetcar Named Desire” as Blanche Dubois. I held a 4.0 GPA all last year and made the Dean’s List, received a small scholarship, and was recognized by the Honor Society as well as the Theatre Department Faculty for my academic efforts. A few of my friends just turned 21, and we love to go out and have pizza or go to the movies. This all sounds like bits and pieces of the normal life of a wonderfully gifted student just starting her college career. My “problem” lies in the fact that I’m 29 years old and in less than four months, I’ll be 30.

I never intended to be in college at age 30. Oh, let me add that I’m also the mother of a 9-year-old. That’s another facet of life that I did not intend by the age of 30. Thirty is when you begin to have children—not have one who is in the second half of elementary school. But to clarify my first statement, I did not intend to be in college at 30...I did not intend to finish college...ever. I was very content being the first drop out in my family.

I was a straight-A student throughout elementary school, and my academic path seemed set. In the 3rd grade I was tested for the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program and made it; I began my GATE classes in 4th grade. My parents were both educators and both taught GATE courses at other schools. I enjoyed my GATE classes, but I became less than happy with my regular classes. The school I attended had a Magnet program, and after my normal school hours, I went to classes like ballet, tap, music, and theatre.

Ah, the theatre. This is where I blossomed and it’s been my greatest passion since the age of four. I’ll do anything for the theatre, and herein lies my downfall. I have a single-minded love for the performing arts, and all my attention and devotion has gone only to that aspect of my life. It’s the only area where I give 100% of myself at all times. Even now with my heavy workload at school and the play, I’m also directing a play for a small theatre company in Los Angeles, and I’ve taken on the role of Associate Producer with a new voiceover company where I’m writing and heading up their children’s department. This may be a sick habit that I’m addicted to, but I would be miserable without it.

But I digress; I got up each morning hating life. Even in elementary school I hated going. I would fake illness so often I’m amazed I didn’t get thrown out for never being there. Of course, that’s only the way my mind remembers it. I’m sure I was there more often than not. However, I looked at school as the enemy.
This was the thing that took me away from the only thing I loved, and that was performing. During the day in my regular classes, I would count down the hours to 2:00 pm when I would be free to go to my performing arts classes—the only classes that had my best interest at heart as far as I was concerned.

I was not a “bad” student by any means. I did my work and was very respectful toward my teachers for the most part and showed many good characteristics of a gifted student. I was highly verbal, precocious, demonstrated an amazing memory (a characteristic that I still carry today), had an advanced sense of humor, and had older friends all through life; I was non-conforming, creative, was—and still am—a total perfectionist, and a very quick learner. But as I got older and wiser, my “giftedness” began to take on those dreaded characteristics that can possibly cause problems and friction within the classroom. I became very bored with routine work and rote tasks; I turned in assignments half done; I procrastinated (let it be known that even this article is being written at the last minute); I was emotionally sensitive and highly intense; I was stubborn, self-critical, and became very impatient with myself and other people—including my instructors. I was vocal in my disagreements, and I tended to dominate others.

There were times in my academic career that I refused to do work simply because I lacked trust or respect for a certain teacher, much to my poor mother’s chagrin. I questioned the relevance of my schoolwork constantly because I knew that what I required to become a performer could not possibly be found in the classroom. I took my art very seriously and truly looked at it as my career path from a very early age. I did not understand my classmates and thought them to immature and shallow. This trend began in junior high and lasted all the way into adulthood.

I was in the GATE program for the first two years of high school, but at age 14, I was cast in a television show and wasn’t able to keep up with my classes. Consequently I fell very behind and was not allowed to move ahead into the honors classes my last two years of high school. This was incredibly frustrating to me because all my friends—the people I actually respected and got along with—went into those classes, and I was stuck with—in my opinion at the time—the dullards. Because of my very precarious situation, I immersed myself in the theatrical arts both in school and out of school. Theatre became my life, my all, my everything. I was doing plays at school, I was directing plays at school, I was part of the Thespian Society, I was doing theatre in the community, and I was failing many of my courses and that made no one in my family very happy. I knew in my heart that I didn’t need school, but also knew that I should at least graduate and I did…barely.

My original plan out of high school was to attend the Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts in Santa Maria, but they are only a conservatory school and offer no degree. Of course, this mattered not to me, but it did to my parents; they talked me into taking the scholarship I received from California State University at Bakersfield just to get started and to save money. So I began my college career in Bakersfield in 1998. I was there for a year-and-a-half. I want to say that without doubt I would have graduated four years later if I hadn’t had a baby my second year—but I really can’t be that sure. Even college was something I hated. I took only two of my General Education classes my first year; all the rest were theatre. And then after flunking one of those, I took only one more Gen Ed course and more theatre classes. I flunked that Gen Ed course, too. I passed all of my theatre classes with flying colors and was very involved in the department productions right up until I had my daughter at the age of 20. After that, school became a distant memory, and I swore off it forever. I would tell anyone who would listen that school was a waste of my time, and that I could be the best actor in the world without stepping foot in another classroom again. Last year, I ate my words…and they were delicious.

At that point in my life, I had done just about every job known to man. I had been a secretary, a deli girl, a disc jockey, an accountant, a store manager, an administrative assistant, and I had just quit my cushy job in sales to be a bartender so I could start working as an actor. Bartending was great, and it was exactly what I needed if I wanted to do the whole “struggling actor” thing, but I knew that was not the kind of life I wanted. I fell into producing and writing about four years ago and found it to be incredibly fulfilling and felt it was perfect if I wanted to create my own success. However, I also knew that I needed money to produce, and so I decided finally to look into getting a job that required a degree. This also meant that I would have to go back to school. Much to my surprise and the surprise of my family, school didn’t sound at all that bad anymore as reluctant as I had always been. Ten years of growth and being a corporate grunt gave me a much better attitude about the whole idea.

I knew community college was the way to go because it was easily accessible and much cheaper than starting at university level. When I first applied and had my initial meeting with a counselor, I explained that I was thinking about going into public relations and would base my academic plan on that idea. Well, with all of my theatre credits left over from Cal State Bakersfield, he suggested that I get my BA in Theatre Arts, I needed only my core classes in order to obtain the theatre arts degree and I’m glad I changed my major. Since then I have re-realized my true passion for theatrical arts and discovered that there are so many opportunities out there to grow and prosper in my chosen field. Taking core curriculum classes doesn’t seem as tedious anymore either. As an older student I understand much more clearly the content and relevance of these classes to my real life. I’m also a much better listener, and I retain information so much better than I ever did before. I look at all these classes now as necessary steps in creating my own success; and I only came to that understanding as a result of a decade of true growth and maturity. I don’t think anyone could have convinced me of this earlier; I had to discover it on my own.

So, a success story? Perhaps. I’m definitely reformed and no longer hesitant about my education as I now know how valuable it is to my life and my choices in the future. My decision to go back to school has only brought me enlightenment, new discoveries, and happiness along the way, and there is no reason to be reluctant about that. ■
Parenting High Gifted Children

Intense Demands, Intense Rewards

Most parents reading this column have children whose advancement is significant but not “off the charts.” You have extra problems to face compared with parenting a more typical child, to be sure, but solutions are usually within reach if you’re flexible, assertive, and persistent.

Parenting highly to profoundly gifted children is a different ball game, simply because the child’s degree of advancement is both profound and rare. In terms of a standard score like an IQ, a score of 145 should be found once in 1,000 children; a score of 155, once in 10,000; a score of 165, once in 100,000; and an IQ of 175, perhaps one in a million. Higher scores are not unknown, and, in fact, there may be a few more children than this who attain these astronomic scores, but even so, think of what this rarity means in terms of finding satisfying opportunities and friendships. Think too of the almost inevitable degree of asynchrony, even if a highly gifted child’s physical and personal maturity are advanced: A child with first-grade printing skills whose reading habits are on a sixth grade level or even higher? A fifth-grader who reads a trigonometry text over the weekend (“math is just another language, mom!”) and totally gets it but still needs her favorite bear to fall asleep?

THE BIGGEST QUESTION: WHERE TO LIVE?

Many families of very bright children instinctively seek privacy in rural settings that offer escape from the hurly burly of cities, bureaucratic schools, and intrusive neighbors. Their back-to-nature choices unfortunately tend not to un-complicate their lives but to make them much more difficult. They would find many more resources in an urban setting, including people and institutions that can help to meet their children’s needs. First-rate colleges and universities with all their assets, symphony orchestras with youth groups for the musically talented, artistic communities for those talented in the visual arts or drama, and school programs for highly gifted can be found in many cities. Above all, cities are more likely to have substantial numbers of families who value education and the life of the mind as well as other bright individuals across the age span who are potential friends for their children.

Seattle, where I live, is one such city. But it is surrounded by islands with pastoral settings that attract young families with very bright children. The parents, many of whom endure long ferry rides to their jobs in the city “for the sake of the children,” find to their dismay that these school districts tend to value the “above average” child, a la Lake Woebegon, and either ignore the very bright or pin the “genius” label on them, which isn’t helpful either. Their profoundly bright children are at high risk of growing up under-challenged, under-educated, and over-celebrated, in danger of believing arrogantly that there isn’t anyone, anywhere, as bright as they.

Of course, not all resources are in cities. Be sure to take advantage of the regional academic talent search for your part of the country, for example, and consult www.ditd.org to explore the supportive program for Young Scholars offered by the Davidson Institute and to find their great collection of articles.

WHO’S THE PARENT?

Even when very young, profoundly gifted children can be intimidating. Often highly verbal and highly logical, they make it easy for parents to be so impressed with their arguments that rules are bent far too easily. Matters have a tendency to escalate from there, with children’s fleeting interests being lavishly catered to and explicit parental expectations becoming weak to nonexistent. This isn’t good for anyone in the family, especially the child. Nothing is more anxiety provoking—especially for a child with a vivid imagination—than being unable to count on order and consis-
tency in your home as well as in the universe, knowing that your own power has limits, and feeling safe because your parents are in charge. Insecure children often mask their insecurity by becoming ever more demanding and prone to meltdowns, thereby continuing to escalate the cycle.

Don't be intimidated even if your children's reasoning and learning eventually outstrip your own. Though they need knowledgeable teachers in their specialties, no one knows your children and their quirks better than you; no one else can provide the continuity and stability—and the love—that you do.

WHAT ABOUT EDUCATIONAL SOLUTIONS?

Elsewhere in this issue, you'll find many ideas for strategies to meet the needs of your very bright and talented children. Stay open to a variety of options. In the domains in which their strengths lie, your children are going to need a significant degree of acceleration, supplemented by depth in sub-domains of interest. Students whose outstanding talents are in fields other than academic will, after a gentle start, need better and better teachers and space in their lives for total devotion if they are to fulfill their ambitions. Time, patience, money, and understanding will be demanded of you in large measure.

The asynchronies in development that are typical of bright children are likely to be even more impressive in the makeup of highly gifted youngsters. There are a number of ways to address this situation, most of them searching out multi-age settings so your child can gravitate toward what feels right on different occasions. Subject-matter advancement of multiple degrees will work for some students (e.g., part-time home schooling or tutoring, or mornings at college or conservatory and afternoons at middle school). Grade skipping may well be part of the picture, as well as early entry to kindergarten, high school, or college. Fortunately, skills-oriented domains such as music and dance, and special interest groups such as chess or photography, tend to be organized by levels of expertise rather than age.

When a student is pulled in many directions because of talents and interests in several fields (“multi-potentiality”), it’s important to go beyond age-appropriate norms to assess underlying degrees of talent that are probably more uneven than they seem. Experts in those fields can help; sometimes objective tests can help as well. An important study of highly gifted students found that actual profiles of ability, when pushed close to the students’ limits, hardly ever showed equal potential across the board. Feedback of this kind can be valuable to a student who feels confused. It’s also quite possible to combine domains. One profoundly gifted student whose math insights are remarkable is fascinated with Russian language and literature. Only 19 now, and about to graduate from a leading U.S. university, he has already spent several months studying with leading Russian mathematicians and plans to return there for graduate study.

When to begin specializing? There’s no rule that fits all. In classical music or dance, one must begin quite young to become world-class in stature. In the sciences, specialization may not emerge until college. There’s virtue to keeping at least some options open, but also virtue to striding ahead toward genuine expertise. There never will be a way to judge what would have happened had the “other fork” been taken!

WHAT ABOUT FRIENDS?

Being so far ahead of one’s age mates can be dreadfully lonely. Highly gifted students, in the words of Leta Hollingworth, have difficulty “suffering fools gladly,” i.e., tolerating the typical. Lucky students will develop a variety of friends, often of different ages, but a best friend may be very, very hard to find. As students grow older, their natural circles will widen, but meanwhile the loneliness may be hard to bear. Parents often step in temporarily, but kids need parents and friends. You need to get past the notion that their best friend must be an age mate, and you certainly don’t want to hold your child back in school “for the social agenda!” Furthermore, don’t let anyone convince you that you’re “robbing your children of childhood” when they are desperately yearning for friends who “speak their language.”

AVOIDING THE “PRECIOUS CHILD SYNDROME.”

Highly gifted students do need and deserve extra support from their parents, but everyone in the family has needs. Children who are praised too lavishly and made too precious are unlikely to achieve the resilience that leads to responsible self-direction, success, and satisfaction. The family that devotes too much of its resources to a gifted child and makes too few demands may be profoundly disappointed if things don’t turn out as they dream. Even very highly gifted children need to do their share of household chores and get along with brothers, sisters, and friends. They need to respect both other youngsters and teachers who may not be as quick as they wish. And they need to acquire a healthy degree of modesty that involves a realistic view of their gifts—and their non-gifts!

I once visited a home that had become a temple to a brilliant (IQ>200) and musically talented six-year-old whose parents were totally devoted to his development. The entire living room housed a library of materials the family had amassed as he had gone from one short-lived passion to another. Everything afforded this child was the best—the preschool to which he was flown a good hour each way three times a week, the most distinguished professors as tutors, the debut of an early composition by an outstanding orchestra. Friendships with other children were discouraged. Despite his early promise, this youngster’s adult career has not been impressive nor do I gather from his weblog that he is particularly happy. And the parents are no longer a couple.

So—congratulations on your good fortune and sympathy for what life is asking of you! And very best wishes on your journey.

NANCY M. ROBINSON, Ph.D., is Professor Emerita of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Washington and former Director of what is now known as the Halbert and Nancy Robinson Center for Young Scholars. Her research interests have focused on effects of marked academic acceleration to college, adjustment issues of gifted children, intellectual assessment, and verbal and mathematical precocity in very young children.
Who are profoundly gifted students? How are they like other gifted youngsters, and how are they different? Aren’t all gifted students simply “gifted”? Gifted individuals aren’t alike any more than members of any other group are. Are all tall people identical? No. There are degrees of “tallness.” Likewise, there are degrees of giftedness. The normal curve that determines a student’s ability relative to the rest of the class clusters profoundly gifted students into the far right tail of that curve, a considerable distance above the norm for the class.

What commonalities do profoundly gifted students share with other gifted youngsters? Gifted students generally are inquisitive; can solve “school” problems quickly; learn at a faster pace than their age-mates; welcome intellectually challenging assignments; and use their keen sense of perception to make judgments about peers, teachers, and others. Profoundly gifted students have these same traits but with significantly greater intensity. They are also voraciously competitive with one another, desiring to excel beyond their peers.

So, who are profoundly gifted youngsters? They are students with superior intellectual abilities and a thirst for knowledge that they pursue passionately. Many produce such advanced-level work that their teachers often find it beyond their years in meaning and sophistication. They set exceptionally high standards of perfection for themselves and persist zealously toward achieving them.

DISTRICT’S TOP ADMINISTRATOR CALLS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION OF THE GIFTED

How do we teach profoundly gifted students who are far more eager to learn than most youngsters their age and predictably will achieve every learning objective of each subject’s syllabus in just a fraction of the anticipated time? Understanding how these students think and learn requires time and professional training.

Curriculum for these rapid learners often resembles defensible curricula used with other gifted students, the major differences typically being complexity and pace. An example of a highly successful program for profoundly gifted learners is described below, illustrating content, process, and product they need in order to flourish.

We rarely hear school administrators’ advocating strongly for gifted children; yet, this phenomenon did occur in 1935. New York City Superintendent of Schools Harold G. Campbell called for “special education” for gifted students, urging “they be identified early and educated for leadership” (White, 1984). In response, Dr. Leta S. Hollingworth, an education professor at Columbia University, created a unique program at the city’s Speyer School to challenge the district’s most able students, or “rapid learners,” as they were known.
With her eye on her students' future and an educational environment that Goertz, Goertz, and Goertz called a "likely contributor to adult achievement" (1978), Hollingworth developed a curriculum of differentiated enrichment comprising four student goals:

- develop attitudes, understandings, knowledge, and skills they would need through life
- gain deeper insight into the significance of contemporary problems and issues they would face in the future
- know the evolution of their culture and its "effect on common things"
- experience practical applications of the regular curriculum via speakers and field trips to museums.

Hollingworth was convinced that by broadening their knowledge base, her students would lead more productive lives as adults and that curriculum enrichment was key.

ENRICHMENT AS PREPARATION FOR LIFE: FIRSTHAND ACCOUNTS FROM THE RAPID LEARNERS THEMSELVES

Forty years later, her students recalled Hollingworth's experiment in great detail and with fondness and respect when asked about it by a researcher examining this unique program. What could have been so compelling?

Willard L. White's interview questions evoked poignant memories, "Speyer was a relief and a challenge...a much freer place...more about it that led to inquiry...a group of kids I could feel comfortable with...the general educational approach has left an impact."

These former students described Hollingworth's units of study, a curriculum approach used traditionally with all elementary students. But her *modus operandi* differed widely from practices implemented elsewhere: she enriched the curriculum through choices, strategies of connecting elements of study, and emphasizing their role in real life. She gave her rapid learners a wealth of opportunities for personal achievement.

Hollingworth perceived education as a mix of initiative and originality, depending primarily on "sound and exhaustive knowledge of what the course of preceding events has been...especially, to know what evolution of culture had been" (Greenberg & Bruner, 1941). She emphasized the significance of *people above things* in the progress and development of the human race and, through the study of biography, impressed this belief on the profoundly gifted students she was grooming for lives of leadership.

The differentiated curriculum used in Speyer School offered students choices for reinforcing their learning. They could work independently, in pairs or groups, and determine the type of product that would display their learning most potently. Some chose oral or written reports; others grouped to complete projects. As one subject explained to the interviewer, "Every unit represented democracy in action: discussion followed by participation...provided each pupil an area in which to excel in accordance with his or her aptitudes and abilities."

Emerging from White's interviews are three distinguishing characteristics of Hollingworth's curriculum for rapid learners:

- lessons were not pre-determined or categorized
- study was centered on student needs and interests
- curriculum was based on enrichment, including many topics not in the city's standard curriculum.

Hollingworth's curriculum, perceived as "the means by which the school was to assist the students in improving their daily living" (White, 1984), truly was the wind beneath the powerful wings of these exceptionally capable students.

Another former student commented on Speyer School's pace and purpose: "...the natural curiosity of childhood was constantly being fed. Conceptualization became habitual. Searching, trying, inquiring, and testing were normal activities. That foundation...I have been grateful for." Others noted that students’ talents were celebrated, not rejected, as some of these youngsters had experienced in previous schools.

One profoundly gifted student who experienced this rejection firsthand did not mince words in her interview: "I recall being very bored in third grade. If you finished your work, you could assist another student, read your book upside down, or count backward from a million. The teacher had to get the curriculum into the slowest student."

CURRICULUM FOR TODAY'S RAPID LEARNERS

Hollingworth's former "rapid learners" expressed a deep appreciation for the intensity of scholarship; the competitive spirit among classmates; the self-confidence they developed—when frequently on display in radio shows and classes at Teachers College, especially; the depth of subjects studied; and the freedom and encouragement to extend their learning according to their individual interests. This approach to learning built a solid foundation for their adult achievement. Given their superior abilities in comprehension, vocabulary, memory, and verbal ability, they left Speyer with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to make their respective marks on the world.

Which educational experiences do today's profoundly gifted students need to become productive human beings? Although the enrichment approach Hollingworth used with her students is somewhat akin to the Enrichment Triad Model developed in the 1970s by Joseph S. Renzulli at the University of Connecticut, the stimulus for productivity is different. Whereas Hollingworth's teacher-created curriculum units exposed students to learning about life, Renzulli reverses the process by asking students to identify topics of passionate interest or problem of deep personal concern. Topics students have chosen become the vehicle for learning valuable processes to enrich their lives.

Renzulli's model of enrichment emphasizes (1) a student's intensive and multi-faceted exploration of a topic of his or her deep personal interest; (2) acting upon it, using the vocabulary, methods, tools and dispositions of professionals in that field; and, from the knowledge and skills used, (3) creating a uniquely-original product that can positively affect humankind.

AND TODAY?

Regrettably, appropriate education for highly gifted students is still absent from too many classrooms today. Teacher training on educating
gifted students is sorely lacking, as well. These facts lead to most teachers' not understanding rapid learners, so they often ignore them.

Administrators today, plagued by national requirements to raise the performance of our lowest-performing students to acceptable standards, are in the same “catch 22” situation as had developed in New York City’s schools in the 1930s. As efforts increase to improve our slowest students, our most capable youngsters are ignored, or, at best, given “busy work” they already know how to do and waste their time 50% of the school day, if not more.

The story of Hollingworth’s Speyer School program for rapid learners began when one courageous administrator had seen enough. His call for a special type of education for gifted learners was an honest admission that the district was shortchanging its most capable students.

It’s time we administrators step up to the plate and defend the right of today’s rapid learners to learn something new every day. Their sharp minds dull quickly when each school day becomes a regurgitation of the day before it and nothing new is learned. Administrators would do well to examine Renzulli’s enrichment model, now expanded for schoolwide use (1985). When the buy-in to schoolwide enrichment begins at the district level, teachers teach all students, and all students learn.

REFERENCES
Josh was trying to explain why he had disliked school so much. As a young adult he had just received national recognition for his designs and award-winning sculptures. His reputation for his unusually creative use of space had made him one of the most sought after young artists of the day. He was obviously a profound thinker and innovator who spoke well and brought originality to his writing and to his art. However, just a few years back, he had average to low grades in most of his school subjects and had managed to graduate from high school just barely above average. He was especially low in the area of math. I was most curious about how someone so highly intelligent and creative could not only perform at such a low level at school, but also so thoroughly dislike the whole school experience.

“Don’t you have to work with mathematical and geometric concepts in your designs?” I asked.

“Oh, sure,” he confirmed.

“But you just said you were totally lost in those classes at school.”

“I was!” he emphasized.

“Josh, I’m not understanding,”

“Well,” he explained. “I answered the problems, but the teachers were always asking, ‘Tell me the process you used. What steps did you follow?’ I had no idea what they were talking about.”

“Why was that a problem?” I asked.

“I just didn’t know what they wanted, so I quit doing anything.”
“How do you solve such problems?” I asked.

“I don’t know. When I learn new information it just has a shape. Then when I have a problem it has a shape. I just find the information that has the same shape as the problem, match them, and that solves the problem. It works in art or math or anything. But there aren’t any steps. I just scan and match the shapes. Isn’t that how you do it?”

NEW DISCOVERIES

Characteristically, highly gifted persons have been found to process information at an extraordinary speed, show rapid and thorough comprehension of the whole idea or concept, and have an unusual ability to perceive essential elements and underlying structures and patterns in relationships and ideas. The neural connections have become more integrated, more quickly made, and far more complex. In the brain there are more dendrites to create more pathways and more richness within the cell itself. The glial cells have increased, and greater myelination of the axons enhance speed and power in the transmission of information from one cell to another, allowing speed of thought and adding power to the retention of ideas and memory to the neural data banks. Highly and profoundly gifted children are biologically different from average learners, not necessarily at birth, but as a result of using and developing the wondrous, complex structure with which they were born.

WHY IT MATTERS

When the inherited patterns and processes of the brain have been enriched by appropriate and powerful learning experiences the result will be a strong, integrated, flexible, and complex brain of an individual that we will refer to as highly or profoundly gifted. Such individuals may find it hard, just as Josh did, to understand how we can expect the same learning processes and behaviors of every student with no understanding or allowance for other ways of seeing solutions or expressing learning.

A continuing and pressing issue for both highly and profoundly gifted learners is the provision of an appropriate education. The higher the expressed intellectual ability, the more difficult the problem of finding a match between the school programs and the student. Although many school settings give limited priority to differentiating learning experiences for gifted students in general, far less priority is given to appropriate learning experiences for highly and profoundly gifted students. As a result of advanced development in mobility as well as early and rapid development of speech and reading, highly gifted children move around independently exploring their world, expressing their ideas, seeking information, and interacting fluently and meaningfully with parents, others, and their environment. It has been noted that moderately gifted children waste nearly half of their time in a regular classroom and highly gifted children waste almost all of their time.

USES AND OUTCOMES

The abilities of highly and profoundly gifted children bring acclaim and awe from adults and age-peers alike; however, these children may find that with their abilities there are few educa-
Back in the day when my idea of the perfect two-week vacation was hiking in New Hampshire’s White Mountain National Forest, it mattered little to me which of the grand peaks I would ascend on any particular morning. Mt. Jefferson was a bit less tall than Mt. Adams, and even the granddaddy of the Presidential Range, Mt. Washington, had a summit only a few hundred feet higher than its less lofty neighbors. What would a small difference in altitude matter at the end of the day? As it turned out, that small difference in height made all the difference in the world. Mt. Washington was open to the worst weather elements on Earth (in fact, it has recorded the planet’s highest recorded wind speed, 231 mph), the ascent to its craggy apex was pockmarked with crevasses and boulders both, and the total lack of trees and omnipresence of piercing winds for the last hour’s trek up Tuckerman Ravine Trail has stymied many a hiker, causing a hasty retreat to lower elevations. No doubt about it, Mt. Washington was—is—in a class all its own. The other peaks might be merely a few hundred feet lower in height, but their scale was manageable—their ascent assured except under the worst weather conditions. How could a landscape that seemed so similar from afar be so different up close? But it was…it was.

Three decades pass. I’ve lived many places since leaving my New Hampshire home, and my current notion of “roughing it” is staying at a Sheraton Hotel that does not have an indoor swimming pool. And just as my vacation preferences have changed, so has my professional focus, for I began my career in New Hampshire as a teacher of children labeled as “educable mentally retarded,” only to find myself several years later in Ohio as someone dedicated to the intellectual and emotional care and feeding of gifted children.

As a teacher, counselor, and dad, my work with gifted children has taught me this: just as the peaks in the Presidential Range look deceptively similar until examined closely, so is the term “gifted” and the people to whom it applies, markedly different upon careful scrutiny.

HIGHLY GIFTED, BARELY SERVED: A BIT OF SAD HISTORY

When the field of gifted child education (GCE) was founded almost 100 years ago, its recipients were children whose abilities were so far afield from the norm that their differences shouted out for attention. Landmark educators like Leta Hollingworth (Hollingworth, 1942) pioneered educational experiences that, still today, would be considered best practice innovations, as evidenced
in her extraordinary curriculum, *The Evolution of Common Things* (Hollingworth, 1938). Back then, advocates of gifted children shared backgrounds only found rarely today among GCE professionals: psychology. Thus, Hollingworth was joined by Lewis Terman and Lou Fleigler and John Gowan, all individuals who looked at gifted children from a vantage point of psychology and counseling. Their work focused on the inherent conflicts that result when a 10-year-old boy or girl has the mind of a 17-year-old, the social skills of an 8-year-old, and the emotional intensities of a 30-year-old. The words of these GCE pioneers were eloquent; their insights profound. Recognizing that gifted children were uncommon but not rare, the focus of these early efforts included no more than the top 2%–3% of all children. An IQ of 140 was the starting point of giftedness and, by definition, very few individuals ascended to that intellectual equivalent of Mt. Washington.

Then something went awry. Our society became uncomfortable with the exclusiveness of the gifted label. Proponents of giftedness were called elitist when they advocated for educational services that challenged these brightest of children. Accusations of racism abounded as the majority of children identified as gifted were white and middle class. The 1970’s and 1980’s ushered in societal changes that raised the still unanswered question, “Can we be equal and excellent, too?” In response, a new generation of advocates of GCE (Renzulli, 1978; Renzulli and Reis, 1985) and intelligence in general (Gardner, 1983) began to propose a loosening of conceptions of high intelligence, casting a wider net to find more children gifted in more ways than ever before. The IQ test became the enemy and less formal, more inclusive means were sought. In many cases, the term “gifted” itself was considered a barrier—a lighting rod that attracted unwarranted attention. So, gifted children now became “able learners” (Cox, Daniel and Boston, 1985) or “academic achievers.” As the definitions of giftedness broadened, a mantra became the bywords of many: “You know,” they’d say, “everyone is gifted in some way.” To argue this absurdity branded one as the aforementioned elitist or racist or both. As a result, gifted programs either ended or became so inclusive that they failed to serve the very children that Leta Hollingworth had so valiantly fought to assist. Highly gifted youngsters—that small percentage within the general population—became the stepchildren of a field that was originally intended for them alone. In most cases, that’s the situation in which we find ourselves today, as the gifted children who go most underserved are the ones that exhibit the greatest degree of needs.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

With the numbers of highly gifted children so small, it is doubtful that the majority of people reading this article are teaching or living with more than one or two of them. Instead, most readers of Gifted Education Communicator are more likely to be concerned about children I call “junior varsity gifted” (JVG). These are the children whose abilities are above average but not extraordinary. A grade-level based curriculum will not provide a challenge for these JVGs, but lessons accelerated by a year or two will do them just fine. The JVGs find themselves fitting into most social situations, as they have more in common with typically developing others their age than there are marked differences. The JVGs are the meat-and-potatoes of most school’s gifted programs: they think clearly and critically, articulate their insights in ways that show advanced abilities, and understand the nuances of their teachers’ bad jokes.

What distinguishes the JVGs from highly gifted children—Varsity Gifted, if you will—is this: most of the needs the JVGs possess can be addressed well and fully through school curriculum that both advances and enriches their learning. On the other hand, highly gifted children have their most profound needs not in relation to curriculum, but in relation to overall adjustment in a world where they are, indeed, a tiny minority. Most highly gifted children find little in common to talk about with their classmates, who they often perceive as “small-picture” thinkers. Thus, they gravitate towards the company of older children or the adults who “get them” and their advanced levels of insight. Where JVGs may question the status quo or find logical discrepancies between the words and actions of adults, highly gifted children become crusaders in their quest to right every illogical or unethical wrong that they encounter. To these highly gifted few, everything matters; a schoolyard-bullying incident is as serious to them as is a breach of an international treaty—and they are likely to be well versed in both topics. With JVGs who are not performing well in school, the underlying reason, generally, is boredom; but for highly gifted children in the same predicament, they choose to do poorly because it is their moral imperative to do so. “How dare my school not provide what they know I need to learn!” they will utter quietly or loudly. Turning in top performance in a school that is mired in standardized minimums is as anathema to these Varsity Gifted children as is eating meat on Good Friday to a devout Catholic.

Why should you care? Because a society that gives up on any of its children due to the exclusiveness of their needs or the rarity of their occurrence is one that doesn’t truly believe in the sanctity of individual growth and fulfillment. It is a society mired in superficial views of excellence.

....WHAT TO DO?

So what’s a teacher (or parent?) to do? If the number of highly gifted children is so small, how can we serve them appropriately, especially in small schools where their population might be counted on one hand?

Let’s try to answer this question beginning in the place where highly gifted children are most often identified: in the home. In my work with many, many families of highly gifted kids, I am no longer surprised by a finding—what initially took me aback—that parents often detect giftedness in their children from infancy: “She just wouldn’t sleep,” or “He seemed to have an awareness about him and his surroundings that other children just did not possess,” or “She could detect even small differences in room temperature or the feel of particular fabrics on her body.” Time and time again, parents follow these statements with the frustration of sharing these observations with friends or family members, only
to be told that they were “just imagining” these insights. Parents of highly gifted children often find themselves as outliers even in parent support groups, because those with JVG children dismiss these parents’ accounts as exaggerations. How ironic that in the one place where parents of highly gifted kids hoped to find comfort, they sometimes encounter skepticism. So they keep quiet, these parents, left to wonder if, indeed, anyone will ever understand their child; to many, the thought of their highly gifted child starting school is anticipated with a deep-seated fear that things will only get worse.

As a parent of a highly gifted child or two, realize this: you will be his or her most ardent advocate, a job that will at times frustrate you greatly. So, begin your homework early: gather as much evidence as you can of your child’s advanced developmental milestones, recording and collecting exemplars that will back up your claims from spurious school officials who want to tell you that “all parents believe that their children are bright...special.” Next, in preparation for school’s arrival, carry with you a portfolio of ways that you have immersed your child in learning. Family trips, museum visits, books read, math computed...each is rife with true scenarios that show your child’s talents and insights. Showing these off is not showing off; rather, it is giving school personnel directions on how to reach your child’s mind.

An effective advocate thinks beyond his or her own cause, and this is another element to your success. Locate your school district’s mission statement. No doubt, it will make some assertion about the District’s role in helping children to attain “their full potential,” or some other such grandly-worded goal. Use such documents to your advantage if you or other parents of highly gifted children encounter roadblocks such as “we don’t make it a practice to grade skip a child” or “all children need to be with others their age so that they will learn social skills.” Such platitudes disguised as good intentions will not serve your highly gifted child well. Challenge them by tossing the “full potential” ball back into the court of the people making such hollow pronouncements.

When it comes to teachers, know this: no teacher wakes up every morning with the goal of boring his or her students or putting the brakes on their learning. That’s not to say that this means you will find every teacher a beneficial one for your child, but what it does imply is that teachers, to a great extent, are caregivers who want to do the right thing. Focusing on when they do, and providing them with guidance on what has worked well with your child in the past, will lead to more successes than failures. Also, with today’s relentless quest for “excellence” as measured by state-man-
course, and the wise teacher will use all the school’s resources to help those who need extra assistance.

But what about those students who know the curriculum before it is taught? The ones who want to discuss the positive elements of communism in its pure form when a review of democracy is in the lesson plan? Those gifted few who correct the teacher’s spelling? Point out inconsistencies in how discipline is applied? Cry out in despair that the school’s recycling program will never make a dent in the global crisis anyway? These children are often the most highly gifted . . . and the most frustrating for the teacher who was never introduced to the possibility that intellectual brilliance might exist even in a third or fifth or eighth grader.

Teachers and parents together must demand—demand—that some time be allotted in the professional development calendar to address the characteristics of highly gifted children and how to serve them. Even if a strong gifted program is in place in a school, the few highly gifted children will have needs that transcend the accelerated or enriched options that such programs provide. Where can a classroom teacher go when meeting one of these highly gifted children, and how is the teacher to distinguish if this child is brilliant or merely a loudmouth whose wild ideas are an attempt to gain disruptive attention? Such direction can occur when a school district simply begins by acknowledging the presence of highly gifted children by focusing some of its staff development dollars on their behalf. Even something as simple as a book study conducted by teachers interested enough in this topic is a place to begin. And the resources have never been more available, thanks to the creation, in 1999, of the Davidson Institute for Talent Development (DITD), a nonprofit organization devoted exclusively to highly gifted children and their parents. With its free on-line library of articles on every aspect of extreme intelligence—from assessing preschool children for giftedness to signs of depression in gifted adults—to its “Educators Guild” that provides teachers, counselors, and administrators nationwide with ideas for meeting the needs of highly gifted children, DITD (www.ditd.org) is the godsend that had been lacking in our field since its inception.

At this point, I should probably provide a to-do list of how teachers should structure their classrooms to provide an appropriate environment for highly gifted students. However, such a recipe would not take into account an important truth: the ingredients will differ for each highly gifted child you meet. Instead of offering suggestions for differentiation of curriculum, let me propose a differentiation of attitude. For only when school members—teachers, administrators, counselors—commit themselves to serving a population of children whose needs are sometimes unrecognized or ignored will highly gifted children be both served and respected. The directions are there, and the directions are many. The real question is whether we have the will to move forward on behalf of our schools’ most vibrant young minds.

Frederick Douglas said, “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.” He may not have had gifted children in mind when stating this truth . . . but I do. The damage caused by refusing to serve those whose intellectual abilities far surpass those around them; the dismissal of the intellectual and emotional needs of highly gifted children that can lead to apathy and low achievement among those capable of reaching the stars; and the sincere disrespect we show when we serve every other type of intellectual or emotional difference in children except for those with the highest abilities, are harbingers for future broken children, shattered dreams, and shredded desires to give back to a world that has given so little to them.

When will we stop ignoring the obvious?

MOUNTAIN HEGIRA

In the heyday of idealism in my late 20’s, I thought I would return to New Hampshire’s mountains once my doctorate was complete. Life’s path led me elsewhere, though, and that uncharted voyage has been exquisitely worthwhile and joyous. Since some family still live in the shadows of the Presidential Range, however, I return occasionally to the roots of my dreams. And when I do, I arise early to capture the snow-swollen peak of Mt. Washington as it awakens to the morning’s first rays. For just a moment it stands alone, taller than tall, a singular force of nature, recognizable by its solitary eminence. It is then that I recall most vividly that among mountains, as among gifted children, some will come to be seen as giants.

REFERENCES


Jim Delisle, Ph.D., is a retired professor and teacher of gifted children. His books include the best-selling Gifted Kids’ Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook (with Judy Galbraith), published by Free Spirit, and Parenting Gifted Kids, published by Prufrock Press. A frequent presenter nationally and abroad, Jim’s career has focused on the social and emotional needs of gifted children and teens. He can be reached at jim.delisle@yahoo.com.
It’s one thing when you expect more from her.
It’s another when she expects more from herself.

The Program for the
Exceptionally Gifted
at Mary Baldwin College

The only residential program of its kind in the nation, PEG offers gifted young women as young as 13 the chance to begin their college careers early. Mary Baldwin believes in excellence for every woman, every day. Come discover how women who are ready for college instead of high school are exceeding their own expectations at MBC.

To learn more call 540-887-7039 or e-mail peg@mbc.edu. www.mbc.edu/peg

boldlybaldwin
Felicia and Jocelyn, ages eight and ten respectively live in two different states and do not know each other, yet both share some characteristics—cognitive and personal—in common. Both are in the highly gifted IQ range, both have advanced verbal abilities, and both are extremely strong in mathematical reasoning abilities. Yet as one might suspect, each has distinct qualities and characteristics that distinguish them as unique. Felicia is somewhat introverted. She cares deeply about the environment, especially animals, and hopes to become a veterinarian one day. Her mother says they have rescued any number and type of stray or injured animals you might imagine. Jocelyn is extraverted, chatty, and highly social, with strong visual and imaginative abilities. Interested in buildings, structures, and construction toys since she was quite young, she loves to draw and has a journal filled with buildings—homes, schools, and libraries—she has designed. She has also researched the necessary requirements for becoming a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity.

Patrick, another very advanced child, has just started third grade. He reads at the sixth grade level and has been writing a book for over a year. He does this on a desktop publishing program since his fine motor skills are a bit delayed. Last year, when his teacher provided each student with a sheet of ten hearts to make Valentine’s cards for their friends in the class, he went to the teacher with a tear in his eye and told her that he couldn’t do the assignment. He was deeply concerned about hurting the feelings of students he didn’t include in the project.

David, age eleven, has been reading the news magazines his parents subscribe to since he was in the primary grades. He followed the recent presidential campaign and election very closely, and has become particularly curious about health care and became deter-
determined to understand why so many in our country do not have adequate health care.

Anecdotal accounts and case studies of highly gifted children such as these reveal not only advanced intellectual development far beyond what is typical for their age, but also heightened sensitivity and intensity, unique personality differences, and uneven social-emotional development. Such patterns often distinguish the highly gifted from more typically developing children.

**ASYNCHRONY AND ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT AMONG THE HIGHLY GIFTED**

Clearly these highly gifted children have a wide range of intellectual gifts, unique trajectories of personal development, and complex social and emotional awareness and concerns. Yet, for all these individual differences, the highly gifted often share certain traits and needs.

Giftedness is asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching, and counseling in order for them to develop optimally.

The Columbus Group, 1991 (emphasis added)

Gifted, talented, and creative people are commonly known to be energetic, enthusiastic, intensely absorbed in their pursuits, endowed with vivid imagination, strongly sensual, and often emotionally vulnerable. As the above quote indicates, the highly gifted are potentially even more likely to show these traits. They tend to react strongly to aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, sensual, and other stimuli. Because of their intensity, highly gifted children may be perceived as particularly difficult or challenging. At the same time, this sensitivity and intensity provides the energy behind the drive to know, to create, and to become (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009).

**OVEREXCITABILITIES (OEs)**

One theory is particularly useful in understanding the connections among intellectual precocity, intensity of personality, and potential for advanced development. Kazimierz Dabrowski’s Theory of Positive Disintegration (Mendaglio, 2008) specifically addresses the psychological development of the gifted, talented and creative.

Dabrowski’s concept of developmental potential includes talents, specific abilities, and intelligence, plus five primary aspects of personality referred to in Polish as nadpodbudliwość, translated as “overexcitability.” Dabrowski explained the sensitivity and intensity experienced by many gifted individuals in terms of overexcitabilities—a greater capacity to be stimulated by and responsive to external and internal stimuli—and described five specific areas of overexcitability: psychomotor, sensual, imaginative, intellectual, and emotional. Overexcitability permeates a gifted child’s existence. Overexcitability orients and focuses experience. Overexcitability gives energy to intelligence and talents. Overexcitability shapes personality and affects development throughout one’s lifespan.

The five overexcitabilities, which are assumed to be part of a person’s constitution and to be more or less independent of each other, have been likened to color filters or channels through which the world is perceived and felt (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009), or as a lens that can open, widen, and deepen perspective. However, these lenses can be wide open, narrow, or operating at a bare minimum, depending on an individual’s innate endowment and environmental occurrences.

While the overexcitabilities are central to the highly gifted individual child’s self, identity, and developmental potential, they also bring with them behaviors that confound adults. Therefore, suggestions for how adults may respond to children’s overexcitabilities in a positive way are presented. Suggestions are provided to show how parents, teachers, counselors and other educators might help children learn strategies to modulate the expression of their OEs, varying by circumstance and the child’s needs.

To modulate means (1) to regulate or adjust, (2) to alter or adapt according to circumstance, (3) to change or vary the pitch. All too often children are asked, or expected, to completely quiet or squelch expression of their OEs. This can damage the child’s sense of self and may place unnecessary constraints upon and inhibit the individual’s capacity for development. Instead, with new insights, adults can gain tools to help the child discover choices and options for how and when a child expresses an OE.

Please keep in mind that a child may exhibit heightened experience of one, several, or all of the OEs, and that each OE may imbue both advantages and challenges for the child. Generally, the brighter, more inquisitive, and more creative the child, the more likely the child’s OEs and related behaviors and needs will permeate and influence daily activities. It is helpful to remember that each OE, in some way, provides the energy or fuel that contributes to the development of a

**Kazimierz Dabrowski** (1902-1980) was a Polish psychiatrist and psychologist who studied the development of creatively, artistically, and intellectually gifted youth. He took the intensity of their emotions, their sensitivity, and tendency toward emotional extremes as part and parcel of their growth and development. In their intensified experiencing, feeling, thinking and imagining, he perceived the potential for further growth. Dabrowski’s life work was devoted to developing insight into and supporting the development of those individuals with unique potential who—being open to greater possibilities and realities—might also be vulnerable in certain contexts and situations.

In his clinical practice, he specialized in working with intellectually, artistically, and creatively gifted and children, adolescents and adults. He found that those whose considerable intellectual capacities, emotional richness, and creative vision brought them insights and experiences of an unusual nature were easily labeled as abnormal, immature, and neurotic (Piechowski, 2002). Yet, Dabrowski saw in them, instead, the potential for advanced development.
young person’s talent along with the advantages and challenges that fundamentally shape their ultimate development (Daniels & Meckstroth, 2008).

**Psychomotor OE**

Psychomotor overexcitability is significantly correlated with high intelligence (Ackerman, 1993). Intellectually gifted and creative children characteristically exhibit a high energy level that may find expression in myriad ways. Children with heightened psychomotor intensity can appear very restless and overly busy. Young gifted children may show rapid, seemingly excessive, almost compulsive speech. They may explain things until you beg them to stop. They may gesture with their entire body, much beyond punctuating hand gestures. Some of these gifted children have a voracious appetite for activity; they’re always moving—or “antsy.” These intense children need to have appropriate outlets for their energies and need to learn appropriate and effective ways of self-management.

Psychomotor OE does not directly relate to advanced physical ability—as in athletics or dance, for example—but rather intensified physical activity and sensitivity. Some children certainly have high levels of physical abilities and talent and find outlets to express their physical energy through sports or dance. Others, though, lack physical prowess, or as a component of asynchronous development, and may even lag in physical development. Because of this, psychomotor OE may or may not find expression and release in sports. However released, physical activity is necessary for optimal self-expression and release of physical energy.

For some, psychomotor overexcitability is an outward expression of inner emotional tension. Such children have a need to move as a release for their emotional tension, and their pent up tension can be very difficult to contain in situations where much sitting is required, for instance, at the dinner table, in the classroom, or during long bus rides to or from school. Anticipating this, providing plenty of opportunities for movement before, during, and after will help a great deal.

Some adults feel annoyed by this physical exuberance and the expression of this inner energy and seek strategies to control and dampen it. Yet, these approaches are typically counterproductive. Rather than defying and fighting it, adults can accommodate these needs for movement and activity and harness this energy in constructive ways.

In school, children don’t really have to sit down to read; instead let them stand up. Twiddling with a soft and silent plaything is one unobtrusive way to release energy while listening in a group. At home, moving furniture, such as rocking chairs, beanbags, and soft indoor toys, can be an excellent outlet.

Another common characteristic and outlet for psychomotor overexcitability is rapid speech. Some children show evidence of psychomotor OE through their abundant verbalizations, literally exploding, or running off with their mouths. Some parents and teachers have found listening to music or recorded stories particularly calming for their children. If impulsiveness interferes with classroom performance or settling down for bedtime, relaxation techniques can be used to assist in these transitions. Halting or quieting techniques (take a deep breath; count to 10; smile) are also options for gently interceding and promoting self-monitoring and control.

Please see the accompanying chart to learn of strategies to encourage modulation of Psychomotor OEs and all overexcitabilities (p. 23).

**Sensual OE**

In sensual overexcitability, the pleasures and delights of the senses—seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting, and touching—as well as multisensory experiences become enhanced. Sensual overexcitability gives children heightened experiences that can provide much delight, and as we shall see, irritation and frustration for the gifted individual as well. As our sensually overexcitable children seek and receive heightened pleasure through their senses, they also may experience intense irritation and frustration from sensory overload. Smells and tastes are more pungent to them. Sounds seem to have more depth and character. Those with sensual overexcitability have heightened sensory awareness and with it, often, enhanced aesthetic appreciation.

It is as if these children see through a different pair of glasses than do most of their age peers: their perception is acute and exquisite. Such exceptionally sensitive children seem to view the world as if through a microscope as compared with normal vision. They sometimes see what others cannot even imagine. They catch details and may, for example, be captivated by the beauty of a glistening drop of oil floating and swirling across a rain puddle. The sight of a sunset over water may bring a tear to the eye and hold a sensually overexcitable child captivated until the last sliver or speck of sunlight disappears over the horizon. Some children love color as an entity unto itself and experience the range of tonal palette such that they can veritably hear, feel, and smell the colors as well.

Smells and aromas may hold deep emotional connections for them, such as the aroma of fresh baked bread triggering an instant replay of the last family holiday gathering. Conversely, these children can have intense negative reactions to certain odors. The same sensual sensitivity that could contribute to a later love of fine dining, may also present as a finicky eater in their early years. Our experiences with families suggest that many gifted children are “picky eaters.” Some eat no “mushy” vegetables, others only pizza, bread, and peanut butter. Finding creative ways to broaden acceptable food choices to include more variety may prove to be a challenge (Heinigk, 2008).

As understanding and supportive adults, we can help these children learn to mediate and modulate their experiences. We can help them develop a menu of options to cope with things that irritate and annoy them, and we can also encourage them to seek what gives them pleasure. We can let them make suitable choices and be responsible for adjusting their environment as much as is possible and appropriate, thus giving them opportunities to manage their own needs effectively. Our goal is to promote self-efficacy in these concerns. We can best support them by encouraging self-management and by modeling some important coping skills.
Intensely emotional children may be bearing enormous loads of feelings that accumulate from their vast awareness of social events and conditions, various fears and anxieties, concern about death, love, loneliness, deep caring for others, and excruciating self-scrutiny.

**INTELLECTUAL OE**

Intellectual overexcitability encompasses intensified activity of the mind, thirst for knowledge, curiosity, capacity for concentration and sustained intellectual effort, avid reading, and precision in observation, recall, and careful planning. Questioning is the hallmark of intellectual OE in the search for knowledge, understanding, and truth. Solving problems, finding it difficult to let go of a problem, and finding new problems to solve is typical. Another trait associated with intellectual OE is reflective thought, exemplified by the metacognition of watching one’s own thought processes, delighting in analyses and theoretical thought even at very young ages, preoccupation with logic, moral go of a problem, and finding new problems to solve is typical.

Children with intellectual overexcitability have a voracious appetite and capacity for intellectual effort and stimulation. Mental activity in these children is usually intensified and accelerated. Driven by wide and deep interests, they relentlessly probe the unknown. Incredibly tenacious and persistent at problem solving, their seemingly endless “why” questions sometimes become annoying and tiresome to parents and teachers, who think, “Don’t you ever stop and take a break?”

Highly excitable and intellectually precocious gifted children are already aware of what is still new information for most of their classmates. The U.S. Department of Education’s (1993) report, National Excellence: The Case for Developing America’s Talent, acknowledged, “Gifted and talented elementary school students have mastered from 35 to 50 percent of the curriculum to be offered in the five basic subjects before they begin the school year” (p. 2). With highly gifted, their rate and extent of learning is higher and deeper still. How is this possible? They seem to absorb knowledge from just being in the world, picking up information from adult conversations and various forms of media. Janneke Frank (2006) wrote that intelligence is about the ability for solving problems; intellectual overexcitability is about the passion to solve them. This drive, this desire, this need to know often serves gifted children well to persist in the development of their talent and the tenacity and perseverance for completing projects or reaching goals. Such tenacity can be a challenge for parents trying to encourage their child to get a reasonable amount of sleep (“It’s time to turn off your light, and give me your flashlight, Aaron.”) or for a teacher who must get the group on to the next scheduled event in any given day. Again, encouraging modulation will help to support the child’s and the adult’s needs.

**IMAGINATIONAL OE**

Piechowski (2008), writing about imagination and creativity, once said, “Tigers might not have imagination, but imaginary tigers can be made of flames.” A novel thought, and somewhat quirky, some might say. Yet, this is the way of the imagination. With imagination, anything is possible. Imagination is key to creativity, from everyday creativity to the creativity of eminent individuals. When we ask, “What would I like to do today?” and think of possibilities, our imagination is engaged. When we plan a unique menu for a dinner party and think of a novel color scheme and flower arrangements, our imagination and creativity is involved. And, if one has an imagination like J. K. Rowling, an entire feast hall with floating candelabras, wizards, and dragons can result.

Highly creative children are closely in touch with this capacity for fantasy and less constrained by notions related to the concrete world. In the imagination, one can travel from a stormy day in the Midwestern United States to a land where scarecrows dance, lions sing, and magic red shoes transport and protect you. Imagination turns a sheet draped over two chairs into a fort, a castle, or a cave. Imagination gives birth to creating fairy tales, science fiction, poetry, murals, and amazing structures made from pasta and shaving cream.

Imagination works and plays in the everyday and contributes to daily joy and reverie as well as to great discovery and invention. Einstein said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge.” He also said, “It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.” Picasso reflected that he spent the first half of his career learning to paint and the second half learning to be a child again and said, “Everything you can imagine is real.”

Imagination creates imaginary friends, a hallmark of creativity in children and an antecedent of adult creativity. Yet, sometimes adults worry about excessive imagination. If there is concern over a child’s depth of imagination, exploration in fantasy, and close relationship with imaginary companions, we typically ask concerned adults to consider what kinds of relationships the child has with family, teachers, or other children. Maintaining positive relations with family, teachers, or a close friend provides a reality check that indicates balance and healthy development with others, while fantasy gives our children mental practice in relating to others. In general, as long as a child can give and receive affection and can relate to others, imaginary playmates are unlikely to indicate anything other than brightness, creativity, and imaginational OE.
## Strategies to Nurture and Encourage Modulation of Overexcitables

### Psychomotor OE
- Discuss the positive aspects of psychomotor OE.
  - You have wonderful enthusiasm and energy.
  - Your intensity can help you do many things.
  - I wish I had your energy.
- Plan for movement opportunities before and after a long period of stillness.
- Provide for reasonable movement in a variety of settings.
- Involve them in a physical task; send them on an errand.
- Help the child notice signs of exhaustion or need for quiet time.
- Provide for and model activities that soothe and calm.
- Teach that time-out can be a choice, not a punishment.
- Consider physical or occupational therapy as needed.

### Sensual OE
- Discuss the positive aspects of sensual OE.
  - You take such delight in beautiful sights, sounds, and feelings.
  - You like ________ sound/textures, etc., but I notice that ________ noises/textures, etc. bother you.
  - I think you know what you like and what feels good to you.
- Provide environments that limit offensive stimuli and maximize comforting stimuli.
- Provide opportunities to dwell in delight. Take time to smell the roses; watch the sunset.
- Co-create a pleasing and comfortable aesthetic environment.
- As much as possible, foster control of the child’s own space.

### Intellectual OE
- Discuss the positive aspects of intellectual OE.
  - Your curiosity fuels your intelligence.
  - You have wide and (or) deep interests.
  - You have great potential to learn new things and to make changes.
- Honor the need to seek understanding and truth, regardless of the child’s age.
- Help the child find answers to her own questions.
- Teach inquiry methods and communication skills.
- Allow children to develop their own projects based upon individual interests.
- Help children to develop goals and engage in self-reflection based on steps toward these goals.
- Seek opportunities to provide interaction with intellectual peers, not necessarily age peers (chess club, multi-grade extracurricular offerings or enrichment classes).

### Imaginational OE
- Discuss the positive aspects of imaginational OE.
  - You have a rich imagination.
  - You view the world in a different way.
  - You make the mundane extraordinary.
- Model and share examples of creative and imaginational expression.
- Provide opportunities for design and invention. “What do you think cars may look like and be able to do in 2020?” “What are some possible interesting uses for recycled cardboard?”
- Provide opportunities for relaxation and channeling imagination with stories and guided imagery.
- Help children to distinguish between the imaginary and the real world.
- Help children to use imagination to solve problems and cope with challenges.

### Emotional OE
- Discuss the positive aspects of emotional OE.
  - You are sensitive to others’ feelings.
  - You care very deeply and have deep feelings.
  - You are very aware of joy, frustration, sadness, love, anger, and a whole world of feelings.
  - Your deep feelings can add to many of your creative activities.
- Accept feelings and their intensity.
- Teach the child to share her emotions and feelings with others in positive and productive ways—verbally, through movement, art, journaling, or music.
- Teach children to be respectful of others’ feelings or seeming lack thereof.
- Develop a feeling vocabulary—include a continuum of feeling words. How many ways can we describe feeling “bad”? (e.g., annoyed, irritated, frustrated, aggravated, uneasy, anxious, uncomfortable, bored, concerned, sad, etc.) How many ways can you describe being happy? (e.g., content, glad, joyful, blessed, ecstatic, buoyant, and so on.)
- Learn listening and responding skills. An entire chapter is devoted to the importance of listening and responding in “Mellow Out,” They Say by Michael Piechowski. (2006).
- Teach, model, and share relaxation techniques, including deep breathing, stretching, and 2 minutes of quiet (a personal time out).
- Seek out community activities and service projects that might provide an avenue for highly sensitive, deeply caring gifted youth to make a positive difference in their environments.
EMOTIONAL OE

Among the five OEs Dabrowski identified, the expressions of emotional overexcitability are the most extensive. Intense feelings manifest themselves in extreme, complex, positive, and sometimes negative ways. Deep feelings, affects, and emotions—positive and negative—are part and parcel of the gifted personality. For Dabrowski, emotional overexcitability is the most important aspect of human development. It is a significant, logical component of developing a person’s potential. Emotions can keep people in touch with themselves and their own needs for change, as well as connect them to the larger world and social fabric of humanity. Conversely, low emotional excitability seriously hampers people from developing their enriching affective possibilities (Piechowski, 1979).

Intensely emotional children may be bearing enormous loads of feelings that accumulate from their vast awareness of social events and conditions, various fears and anxieties, concern about death, love, loneliness, deep caring for others, and excruciating self-scrutiny. They are exhilarated in joy and affection, and also know great sadness, and compassion encompassing ecstasy and despair. When they are joyous, their radiance lights up the room! When they are sad or disappointed, the weight of the world is on their shoulders. Their feelings can be complex, and ambivalent. They can simultaneously experience an entire range of contradictory reactions. They may be riveted in an approach-avoidance dilemma. Excitement may draw them toward a person, project, or idea; anxiety may simultaneously create a tug of avoidance or withdrawal. Sometimes emotional overexcitability inhibits children. They feel so much that they are almost paralyzed to act for fear that they might act wrongly or get a negative reaction from someone. Often, however, emotional OE is the catalyst for reaching out, for developing empathy, and for seeking to make a positive difference in the world.

POSITIVE DISINTEGRATION

With their overexcitabilities combining with their intellect, highly gifted individuals are likely to be keenly aware of inconsistencies in the world around them and may be intensely disappointed in the behaviors of society, peers, family, or even themselves. Dabrowski pointed out that many of these persons—even as children—go through periods of disintegration and turmoil, but that these periods are often necessary steps to future growth and development as a person. When teachers, parents, and counselors know this, they can react more appropriately and can help gifted children realize that their strong emotional reactions and seeming disintegration may actually be positive aspects of gifted development.

OPTIMIZING DEVELOPMENTAL POTENTIAL – A LIFETIME QUEST

Dabrowski’s theory is a grand theory of human development (Jackson & Moyle, 2008), the scope of which is just touched upon in this article. Although it is a theory not just for the gifted, it holds great power for explaining the psychology of—and informing the parenting, teaching and counseling of—gifted individuals. A recent surge of publications on the applications of Dabrowski’s theory with the gifted makes a wealth of research and practical advice for parents, teachers, and counselors readily available. Every indication suggests that additional research and applications for Dabrowski’s work with the gifted will continue to emerge. In the meantime, celebrating the sensitivity and intensity of the highly gifted will support their ongoing development. Helping highly gifted children gain the skills to modulate the expression of these qualities will both provide them options for navigating their world and optimizing their developmental potential.

Note: The author would like to express appreciation for the insights and reflections shared by Dr. James T. Webb during the writing of this article.

REFERENCES


The Columbus Group, (1991, July). Unpublished transcript of the meeting of Columbus Group, Columbus, OH.


SUSAN DANIELS, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology and Counseling at California State University, San Bernardino and Coordinator of the College of Education graduate Gate Certificate Program. She is coeditor and coauthor, with Michael Piechowski, of Living With Intensity: Understanding the Sensitivity, Excitability, and Emotional Development of Gifted Children, Adolescents, and Adults recently published by Great Potential Press. She is Cofounder and Educational Director of the Summit Center, specializing in assessment, consultation and treatment of gifted, talented, and creative youth and adults in Walnut Creek, CA.
After selling their educational software company in the mid-nineties, Bob and Jan Davidson wanted to give back in the field of education. They discovered that profoundly gifted students, who score in the 99.9th percentile on IQ and achievement tests, were the most underserved in today’s education system.

In 1999, the Davidsons founded a national nonprofit, called the Davidson Institute for Talent Development, to support profoundly gifted young people under the age of 18. The Davidson Institute is based in Reno, Nevada with several local and national programs.

Profoundly gifted students score at least three standard deviations above the norm on the bell curve, placing them at the extreme end of the intelligence, or IQ, continuum. Thus, these students have special educational needs. However, a common misperception is that extremely gifted students can fend for themselves. This is a false assumption—all students, including the gifted, need to be nurtured with access to an education that helps them learn and achieve at a level appropriate to their abilities.

Many parents of profoundly gifted students report that their children become frustrated, depressed, and develop behavioral problems when they are not appropriately challenged in school. Students, especially girls, will “dumb-down” and hide their intelligence to fit in socially.

In fact, up to 20 percent of high school dropouts test in the gifted range and nearly half of all gifted students are underachievers because the educational program they are provided is too easy.

“We are losing our brightest students—our nation’s most precious natural resource—because the one-size-fits-all approach to education is not working,” said Jan Davidson. “We started the Davidson Institute to help these students develop their talents and advocate that they receive an education matched to their abilities. These efforts will not only benefit the students but also the entire nation by keeping us competitive in the global marketplace.”

The Davidsons founded the Institute with the following beliefs in mind.

- All young people should be lovingly nurtured in a safe, supportive environment where each person is accepted and appreciated as a unique individual.
- All young people should have access to an education where they can learn and achieve at a level appropriate to their abilities.
- All young people should have an opportunity to develop their talents in positive ways to create value for themselves and others.
The needs of profoundly intelligent young people should be recognized and accommodated. Their uniqueness should be understood and nurtured. Rather than be locked into an age-based curriculum, profoundly gifted young people should have the opportunity to be challenged to excel and achieve.

The Davidson Young Scholars program began in 1999 with 15 students. Today, that program has served more than 1,800 students. Davidson Young Scholars is a free, individualized, family-oriented program that supports the educational and developmental needs of profoundly gifted young people between the ages of 5 and 18. This program assists parents and students with academic support and educational advocacy, child and adolescent development, peer connections and talent development. The Davidson Young Scholar application deadline is the 14th of each month (www.DavidsonGifted.org/YoungScholars).

Since 1999, the Davidson Institute has continued efforts to build a free, online database, called the Davidson Gifted Database (formerly known as GT-CyberSource) to be the gateway to gifted resources on the Internet. The new Google search feature helps users find topics of interests in hundreds of articles and thousands of resources. In addition, each state’s gifted education policies are listed with an easy-to-use click-through map and an events calendar of conferences throughout the nation—all available free to anyone with access to the Internet. (www.DavidsonGifted.org/DB).

In 2001, the Davidson Fellows scholarships were established to recognize extraordinary young people under the age of 18 who have completed a significant piece of graduate-level work. The categories are science, technology, mathematics, music, literature, philosophy, or outside the box, which is defined as graduate-level work in any other field of study. Davidson Fellow Laureates are awarded $50,000 scholarships, and Davidson Fellows are awarded either a $25,000 or $10,000 scholarship. The deadline to apply is the first Wednesday in March (www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows).

In 2004, the THINK Summer Institute began as a three-week residential summer program on the campus of the University of Nevada, Reno. Today, profoundly gifted students aged 13-to-16 apply for this summer opportunity to take university-level courses and earn six transferable college credits. The 2010 THINK Summer Institute will run from July 10 through July 31. Tuition is $2,700.00 and covers course credits, room and board, and the cost of planned programs and activities. Need-based scholarships are available. To qualify, students must be 13 to 16 years old during THINK, and must meet or exceed designated SAT or ACT scores. The deadline for early acceptance is January 14, 2010. Due to the intense nature of the program, enrollment is limited to 60 students. Homeschooled students are eligible to apply (www.DavidsonGifted.org/THINK).

Next, the Educators Guild was started to assist teachers, counselors, and school administrators interested in gifted education with networking opportunities, locating resources, and opportunities to discuss strategies for serving gifted students. Members of the free Educators Guild have access to electronic mailing lists and the Davidson Institute’s team of consultants who are available to assist via phone and email (www.DavidsonGifted.org/EdGuild).

In 2004, Simon & Schuster published Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting our Brightest Young Minds co-authored by Jan and Bob Davidson, with Laura Vanderkam. This award-winning book has generated conversations throughout the nation about the importance of educating our nation’s brightest students and is hailed as a “manifesto for change” (www.GeniusDenied.com).

The most recent endeavor has been The Davidson Academy of Nevada which opened in 2006 on the University of Nevada, Reno campus as the first public school of its kind for profoundly gifted middle and high school students. The Davidson Academy seeks to provide profoundly gifted young people an advanced educational opportunity matched to their abilities, strengths, and interests. Unlike many traditional school settings, the Academy’s classes are not grouped by age-based grades, but by ability level. Students can accelerate through required middle and high school curriculum subjects at their own pace with access to university courses when appropriate. The Academy is now accepting applications for the 2010-2011 school year. Complete applications need to be submitted by the first of each month, with the final deadline being March 1, 2010. Admissions are on a first-come, first-served basis (www.DavidsonAcademy.UNR.edu).

During the past decade, the Davidson Institute has impacted the lives of thousands of profoundly gifted young people, their parents and educators, as well as the millions who have searched the free, online Davidson Database for information about the gifted population. For more information about the Davidson Institute’s programs, please visit our website at (www.DavidsonGifted.org) or email info@davidsongifted.org.
The literature is sparsely populated with accounts of highly or profoundly gifted (HPG) individuals. These people are most typically identified via a standardized measure as having abilities or potential existing at 3 standard deviations above the norm (i.e., the highly gifted, with an I.Q. of 145+) or 4+ standard deviations above the norm (i.e., the profoundly gifted, with an I.Q. of 160+) on the measuring instrument1. The HPG are presented as geniuses or prodigies. In effect, the HPG are outliers and often treated as though they are beyond the realm of functional assistance by most mainstream educational settings.

There exists no comprehensive resource that can guide educators, researchers, and other scholars in gaining awareness and understanding about the nature and needs of the HPG learner. Thus, very few resources are available to assist educators in developing curricular options for the HPG learner.

This article focuses on providing the following information:

• an overview of the HPG
• a descriptive account and chart of tendencies and/or behaviors associated with the HPG student
• recommendations for development of an educational planning team

MISCONCEPTION PERPETUATION

Many educators assume the gifted make up a relatively homogeneous group. This assumption leads to the perception that educational treatments for the gifted are relatively straightforward and simplistic (e.g., provide enrichment, differentiate the classroom work, etc.) or unnecessary (e.g., the gifted are already performing above proficient or should be).

Perpetuation of these myths causes a significant amount of stress on HPG individuals and their families. HPG kids aren’t the prototypical-gifted learner presented in the literature. Their educational needs should not be ticked off as met by claiming that one’s classroom is “differentiated.”

Indeed, this long-range stress occurs year after year, leading to parental realization that schools offer little opportunity for their HPG child to have adequate opportunity to learn at his/her level of intellect, breadth of interest and/or pace of cognitive ability. Most HPG families make several drastic and wholesale changes in schools in search of an elusive educational environment flexible enough to meet their child’s needs. Many families homeschool as a means of eliminating the psychological and emotional trauma associated with trying to fit into a setting that doesn’t suit or even recognize their child’s needs.
Distinctions in giftedness. In most cases, there isn’t a perceived difference between a child with a measured IQ of 128 and another child with an IQ only estimable by ratio because she “topped out” the instrument’s scale. Both are labeled gifted based on a school district’s identification criteria, which often focuses purely on a minimum cut-off score. There are typically few specific service plans in existence that also differentiate or group gifted students by degree of potential ability.

The current inability of most educators to identify and even minimally address needs leaves the HPG student anxious, frustrated, and otherwise functionally disabled in the classroom. The intent here is to provide educators and parents with preliminary awareness about the unique needs of the HPG individual to avoid the disabling condition.

Much of the issue centers on the lack of a clear distinction between levels of giftedness. If the field of gifted child education clearly articulated levels of “mental assets” to detail “degrees of severity,” there might be more awareness of special needs and acknowledgement that HPGs require educational opportunities uniquely adapted to their needs. The field of mental retardation provides an accepted model gradating severity of mental deficits to which alignment might be possible for the field of gifted child education (Grossman, 1971; Silverman, 1989).

A caveat to distinctions. HPG students’ individually measured IQ scores chart them at 3 or more standard deviations above the mean of the testing instrument. However, the reader must also note that a definition of HPG determined by a threshold IQ score only is not appropriate.

For instance, there is variance on standardized tests, leading some researchers to note the tests are limited in their ability to measure ability (or potential ability) due to regression toward the mean. This result, though, should not be taken to mean disqualification of IQ testing as a tool to documenting (potential) ability. It is meant to note the limited picture that an IQ score represents, and point out that discretion should be exercised when seeing a child “identified” by only one mode of measurement.

An intelligence quotient is an artifact determined at a specific point and time in life. It rarely overstates capacity. Yet, it is subject to interference from both the subject and the psychologist (e.g., mood, anxiety, health, experience, etc.) administering the instrument.

SHOW ME THE NUMBERS

The life experiences of fewer than 100 HPG individuals have been documented in the scholarly literature. They provide the knowledge base about the HPG individual.

Statistically, this is not completely surprising since individuals with a measured IQ of more than 145 should only exist in the population in a ratio of 1:100,000 or fewer. However, in practicality, this number seems very small compared to the relative weight given to the findings of these descriptive accounts.

Interestingly, the majority of the scholarly work conducted with HPG individuals focused on their tendencies and behaviors as elementary-age children. Little exists in the scholarly literature providing comparative explorations that transfer across the HPG population into adulthood.

The nature and needs of HPG individuals should be more thoroughly described and explored. With the interconnectedness provided by the Internet and advances in world-wide communication capabilities, larger numbers of HPG individuals must be included in the data set grounding awareness and understanding about their abilities and needs.

The scholarly record. Within the existing literature, three major sources of longitudinal information form the basis of what is known about HPG individuals. These include: a) Lewis Terman’s longitudinal study on giftedness (1925); b) Leta Hollingworth’s work in New York City with elementary aged children (see especially Hollingworth (1942)); and, c) Miraca U.M. Gross’s (1993) study of 15 Australian youth.

“Short term” scholarship exists (e.g., Barbe, 1964; DeHaan and Havighurst, 1961; Feldman, 1986; Flack, 1983; Gallagher, 1958; Goldburg, 1934; Hildreth, 1954; Janos, 1983; Terman and Fenton, 1921) describing the anomalous tendencies and behaviors of exceptional children. In addition some anecdotal and personal accounts exist (e.g. Bergman, 1979; Lagenbeck, 1915; Mill, 1908; Montour, 1977; Wiener, 1953) focusing on “geniuses” or “prodigies’

FOSTERING AWARENESS IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

The three seminal longitudinal works have small HPG sample sizes (e.g., Terman’s highest IQ group (measuring 170 or higher)—35 participants; Hollingworth—25 children in the “Higher + class at P.S. 165 (IQ 150-183), and 12 children with above IQ 180; Gross—15 participants) but document experiences and growth of the individual over time.

The remarkable consistency in descriptive information about HPG children in these seminal works makes a strong case for development of a resource of tendencies and/or behaviors associated with HPG individuals to help bring awareness to unique abilities and needs in common educational settings or when a formal IQ measure might not yet be available.

Figure 1 provides such a resource, listing possible tendencies and/or behaviors as well as descriptions of these as they might be observed in a classroom setting. The chart is compiled from descriptions evident in the aforementioned literature as well as from research and observed behaviors of HPG children, adolescents, and adults I have worked with in educational contexts over the past decade.

The chart denotes descriptive information about the HPG learner’s tendencies and behaviors only. There is no prescription, remedy, or “cure” an educator can use to solve educational mismatches. The goal is to present a means of bringing awareness to the unique tendencies associated with HPG individuals so an educator can begin the process of seeking assistance in developing curricular options.

An HPG student will not display every tendency or behavior listed. And, tendencies or behaviors will vary over time and in different instructional settings. These limitations aside, the chart provides awareness about the tendencies of HPG individuals so an educator or parent might seek additional information in order to establish or advocate for a learning environment or opportu-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior/Tendency</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isolationists</td>
<td>Are involved in few extracurricular activities associated with school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Leaders</td>
<td>Secretary or Treasurer rather than President.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual learners</td>
<td>Thrive on interconnectedness between concepts. Often have difficulty separating one content area from others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Avoiders</td>
<td>Prefer logic and rhetoric to application of skill sets. Often do not like to take part in “messy” learning experiences (laboratories, field study environments).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimalist Emphasis</td>
<td>When not interested or topic/material is deemed “irrelevant”. In the extreme, viewed as underachievement or defiant behavior. In reality, “selective learning” (interest or passion energy is steering toward another area); or, “submersion” occurring (doing enough to “get by” but protecting personal capacity for interest or passion area). (Schultz, 1999, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsiveness in actions</td>
<td>Intensities driven by interests and areas of developing passion. “Roller coaster” emotions (highest highs and lowest lows); “Whirring like a motor” physical condition (constantly in motion; needing to fidget or continually move); “Acute sensitivities” (colors described as flavors; sensitivity to light; allergies; etc.); “Class Clown” or “Overused Imagination” (can be counted on to lighten a mood; has invisible friends…with families, pets, social/emotional issues and/or otherwise complex lives). (Pechoowski, 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancing Frustration and Anxiety</td>
<td>In settings that do not recognize emotional needs or are not intellectually challenging. Can lead to loneliness, depression, or defiant behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asynchronous Cognition</td>
<td>Strong “clinical” awareness of intellect and ability for abstract thinking; but, lack of understanding how/why different from agemates. Lack of “withitness” to social settings of agemates—causes “inner turmoil” (questioning self esteem) rather than learning from the setting/environment. (Kounin, 1970)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voracious Readers</td>
<td>Stimulates intellect; or used as “release” from non-suitable or “disabling” environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Avoiders</td>
<td>Prefer logic and rhetorical to application of skill sets. Often do not like to take part in “messy” learning experiences (laboratories, field study or other settings where variables are not controlled for)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential Questioners</td>
<td>Philosophical in questioning behaviors; but, also want analytic and clear answers. Can lead to frustration and anxiety (for child and adult).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Differentness” in thinking</td>
<td>Depth of reasoning and rationalizing. Able to circumvent rules by offering (several) examples where consistency is suspect. Often do not realize agemates do not think the same way they do—causes frustration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-linear learning</td>
<td>Leap logical steps during problem solving “skipping forward” to offer insightful conclusions. When deeply intrigued, may stall at one step in a process and seem to “lock in” and not move forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel processing or dual cognition</td>
<td>Able to weight equivalently complex data sets across seemingly disparate focal points. Can be observed (experienced) as punctuated and overlapping responses to a series of questions. Talking through a response and interjecting (as if from “left field”) a more thorough response to a previously asked question or situation; then, immediately “checking” back to the situation at hand without loss of place or pace. (Gross, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral output much higher than written</td>
<td>Prefer conversation/dialogue and debate to handwritten responses. Often show lack of ability to summarize succinctly (involved in detail and broad overview of actions).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1: Highly/Profoundly Gifted (HPG) Student Tendencies in Mixed Abilities Classrooms. “A special ‘thank you’ to Miraca Gross for comments made on a previous version of this chart.”*
nity suitable to the HPG student's needs. A chart of tendencies matched toward extreme giftedness does enable the teacher to seek curricular assistance with supporting observational criteria based on documented awareness of needs.

The chart is not comprehensive. There are sure to be additions to the list of common tendencies and behaviors since so few HPG individuals' lives serve as benchmarks in the literature.

The intent, though, is sound. A set of descriptors can help an educator document and match tendencies and behaviors to begin learning about HPG individuals and their vast capacity to learn. This is especially pertinent to assist teachers understand that the gifted are very different from one another.

BUILDING A LEARNING TEAM

Curricular and other educational suggestions and/or modifications are best approached as a team. Start by identifying the coordinator of gifted or special services in your district. If one does not exist, schedule a meeting with the director of curriculum or your building's curriculum committee. Ask your principal to get involved and help you identify district personnel who have experiences or expertise who can assist.

A team approach allows the teacher to learn about options without having to train him or herself in "all things gifted." The team approach also concentrates knowledge and any previous experiences rather than relying on haphazard "building or district lore" for curricular decision-making.

It is highly recommended that the team involve a professional with experience working in educational settings serving HPG individuals. This individual can provide critical insights about programming or service options (in and out of school) that can address the needs of the HPG learner. In most situations the learning plan will be individualized to the interests of the learner as well as the capabilities of the community—not just the resources of the school or school district.

Parent roles. Parents can and should serve in multiple capacities. First and foremost, parents need to validate their HPG children for who they are as individuals. Help them understand that the world does not necessarily think the same way they do. As DeHaan and Havighurst note:

By the time they reach the age of eight or nine, children with extraordinary talent or intellect are becoming aware of themselves as different. If they do not become aware of their difference, they make naive mistakes of assuming that everyone is like them and understands them. (1957, p. 240)

Second, help educators learn about your child's unique capabilities and interests. Ask about the existing curriculum and suggest ways you might help by developing opportunities for your child to follow their interests.

Third, offer to provide resources or search for outside assistance. The teacher can concentrate on classroom teaching yet gain the knowledge needed to begin modifying the environment to meet your child's needs.

Last, develop a collaborative and flexible approach for interacting with the teacher and school personnel. Ask for the moon, but be the first to offer more incremental solutions so all feel successful (your child, the teacher, and you!).

CONCLUSION

The HPG individual is a statistical rarity in most educational settings. It is highly likely that HPG individuals work their way through—or rather endure the monotony of—school without approaching or finding the extent of their abilities, interests, or passions. Just what personal (intellectual, social, cultural, or economic) capital is lost in this process is unknown.

Ultimately, this article provides a road map to begin your journey working with the HPG learner. The information provides a start, but remains a work in progress. You can (and should) contribute to the development of understanding about and resources to assist the HPG learner. I invite you to share your stories of success, or trials and tribulations. Together, we can have a distinctive impact on devising and implementing educational opportunities that meet the HPG learner's needs, while also enhancing awareness about the nature and needs of the HPG individual in educational settings.

NOTES

1. Some scholars consider 4 standard deviation units as Exceptionally Gifted and 5+ SD units as Profoundly gifted. Since these “top end” scores can only be determined via ratio comparisons, it is difficult to adequately differentiate students beyond 3 SD units as having distinctive tendencies from others in the 3+ SD range. In my work, outlier degrees of difference are less important than adequate awareness of divergence from “typical giftedness.”

2. A notable example is the Davidson Academy in Reno, Nevada where students build a personalized learning plan, modifying it each semester as interests and capacities emerge during schooling experiences.

3. Group administered instruments should be used only as screening tools since these tend to underscore HPG students because of low test ceiling effects (Barbe, 1964; Pegnato & Birch, 1959; Silverman, 1989).

4. Gross' study has a total of 60 participants by publication of the second edition of Exceptionally Gifted Children (2004). Fifteen of the developed case studies are presented in the text, but other cases are discussed in various publications contributed since 1993.

5. To date, my work with HPG individuals tallies more than 100 individuals and their caregivers. I have served as life coach, educational counselor and curriculum director for these HPG individuals and their families.

* Note: References for this article can be found at cagifted.org; click on “Resources” and then “Highly Gifted (GEC).”

ROBERT ARTHUR SCHULTZ, Ph.D., is Professor of Gifted Education and Curriculum Studies at the University of Toledo. He teaches gifted education, curriculum theory and methods of curriculum differentiation and enrichment to undergraduate, masters, and doctoral students. He is Chair of the Conceptual Foundations Network of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and serves as a Young Scholars Specialist for the Davidson Institute as well as a Contributing Editor to Roeper Review and Gifted Child Today. Bob has also served as Director of Curriculum for the Davidson Academy in Reno, Nevada.

30 GIFTED EDUCATION COMMUNICATOR WINTER 2009
While the social, emotional, and academic needs of highly gifted students are not unique, meeting those needs can present quite a challenge to most teachers. Highly gifted students, like all students, need challenging and engaging curriculum as well as opportunities for social and emotional development. Yet, because most of us have not experienced what it is like to be highly gifted, knowing the best ways to meet these needs is not always clear. Those with firsthand knowledge of programs for highly gifted learners, the consumers of those programs, may provide valuable insights for practitioners.

The Cullowhee Experience (TCE) was a unique summer residential program for highly gifted children and youth that was in operation from 1958-2000. The program was housed at Western Carolina University situated in a serene setting in the mountains of Western North Carolina. We surveyed and interviewed former participants of this program to gain their insights regarding the needs of highly gifted children and adolescents. Evaluations of programs for gifted children rarely include long-term effects on the participants. Data on the long-term effects can inform teachers interested in addressing academic as well as the social emotional needs of highly gifted learners. In this article we describe themes that emerged from the study and their implications for classroom practices.

Fifty-one former participants of the Cullowhee Experience completed surveys regarding their experiences as individuals considered highly gifted. Additionally, six former participants were interviewed by phone and postings from The Cullowhee Experience Facebook and MySpace groups were collected.

Themes that emerged from the interviews and surveys were all related to self-fulfillment and included personal growth, acceptance and belonging, intellectual engagement, autonomy, and joie de vivre. Below, we describe each theme, offer sample quotes that represent the themes and recommend practices that promote self-fulfillment. A summary of recommended practices is also included in Figure 1.

**PERSONAL GROWTH**

We use personal growth to represent the social emotional growth reported by the participants, the changes in attitude, perceptions, behavior and self-concept that occurred as a result of the experience. Personal growth occurred in the participants as the result of their being together with intellectual peers in a residential setting. Such terms as independence, identity, self-realization, self-concept, self-confidence, self-respect, and self-reliance are found in the surveys again and again. Sample responses include the following:

“I would say that the sense of independence and self-confidence I gained at Cullowhee also had a very large impact.”

“My mother said that I was a completely different person when I came back after 9th grade....”

“I think that I am the person that I am today thanks to the Cullowhee Experience. I learned self-respect and self-reliance. I learned that I am allowed to make good friends and still be intelligent and creative.”

“I learned that there are not boundaries to capabilities other than those I place upon myself.”
Cullowhee was a chance to feel like part of a “tribe,” in a way that I (and I think most of us) didn’t experience back in our regular schools. I had never experienced such strong bonds with friends, and those relationships had a profound impact on my understanding of my own identity.

The biggest impact is really from a personal growth perspective. I just can’t emphasize enough the personal growth that occurred from being in a comfortable environment among your peers in a somewhat-independent setting. I really think that is part of what has made me the entrepreneur that I am today.

**Recommended practices.** It is easy for highly gifted learners to get caught up in the achievement game, working only toward achieving the highest grades and living up to the high expectations of parents and teachers. Teachers of highly gifted students can deemphasize grades and emphasize growth, by teaching learners about self-actualization and setting personal goals. Teachers can also teach that mistakes and failures are opportunities for reflection and growth. Highly gifted learners should also be allowed to find their passions and their potential as leaders, thinkers and creators.

### ACCEPTANCE AND BELONGING

Studies as early as those of Terman and Hollingworth noted the difference in social acceptance between highly gifted children and their same age peers. Hollingworth (1942) observed that the difference between those with above 160 IQ and their age peers was so great that it was difficult for the highly gifted students to be accepted by their peers, resulting in loneliness and social isolation. Australian children with above 160 IQ in Gross’s longitudinal study reported difficulties with peer relationships, many saying that they had few or no friends (2002). The following quotes from participants in The Cullowhee Experience attest to the critical role that it played in establishing life-long friendships.

“…I blossomed there. I believe it was because I finally felt like I was surrounded by peers that accepted me and were on my level.”

“I liked that all of the kids there were at my level, and you didn’t really have to worry too much about being too cool or too dorky.”

I’m not sure I’d be alive today if it weren’t for the support, concern and guidance of the students and faculty. For example, one of the teachers became my long-term mentor. Another student went to the same university as I did, and we have remained friends since then.

If I had to choose one thing about TCE it was that there were finally so many kids just like me—smart and a little awkward. Before TCE most of my friends were at least 10 years older than me (sic)… through TCE I found kids my own age, going through a lot of the same growing pains [I] was. It

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Examples of Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Growth</strong></td>
<td>• Help clarify personal priorities; they may need help in realistic goal setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide opportunities to explore passions. Highly gifted students should be given opportunities to pursue their individual interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide assistance in understanding self-actualization. Highly gifted students need to be given opportunities to explore divergent paths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide opportunities to practice leadership skills. They may need to be taught leadership skills before practicing them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide opportunities to enhance self-efficacy; encourage them to take risks and avoid an over-emphasis on grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptance and Belonging</strong></td>
<td>• Address the needs of the whole child, not just the academic needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognize and provide support for asynchronous development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for communication and socialization with other highly gifted students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Group by ability; social problems are less likely or could disappear completely when highly gifted students are grouped with their intellectual peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectual Engagement</strong></td>
<td>• Accelerate in grade or subject; highly gifted students should be matched to their individual pace of learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Group with intellectual peers. Highly gifted students should be given opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue with their intellectual peers at least part of the time, if not possible all of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Individualize the educational plan. There is much variability within the highly gifted population, and the higher the ability the more difficult it is to find a match with a school program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Allow the solving of problems in diverse ways; they should be exposed to alternative ways of solving problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide a challenging curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy</strong></td>
<td>• Allow them to pursue individual ideas and interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Involve them in educational decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Give them choices on how they accomplish their learning goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joie de Vivre</strong></td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for fun. Highly gifted individuals have a high level of energy, and safe outlets should be provided for this energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide a safe environment where everything does not have to be perfect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teach them coping strategies to deal with perfectionism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for them to socialize with their intellectual peers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Recommended Practices for Highly Gifted Learners
was also nice to be around kids that loved to learn.

**Recommended practices.** These comments from our study tell us the importance of addressing the need for belonging and acceptance. Teachers can recognize that highly gifted learners often develop asynchronously. Understanding that while a child might be able to discuss global warming at a level well beyond his peers, his or her ability to make friends and navigate social norms and expectations may not be beyond his grade level. Providing highly gifted learners with opportunities for interactions with other highly gifted learners can give them relief from the isolation they may feel. Figure 2 provides some resources for connecting highly gifted learners through technology. Academic competitions where highly gifted learners can interact with their intellectual peers are also included. While highly gifted learners can benefit from opportunities to interact with other highly gifted learners, they may also need assistance with understanding norms and expectations in their relationships with their non-gifted peers.

**INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT**

The capacity of highly gifted children to learn is significantly advanced even beyond the average for intellectually gifted children. It is important to note, however, that we are talking about academic *potential* rather than school performance. These children are extremely intelligent—their capacity to learn is enormous. Yet, research on the classroom performance of such children suggests that the majority of them are required to work in the inclusion classroom at levels several years below their ability (Hollingworth, 1942; Gross, 1993). The following quotations exemplify how critical TCE was in the intellectual development of the participants:

“...Cullowhee was the first place that I really felt the beginnings of independence, which I loved.”

“I would say that the sense of independence and self-confidence I gained at Cullowhee also had a very large impact.”

“I could think more deeply about what I wanted to do or study in life, not necessarily conform to what I thought others expected of me.”

I think the program’s greatest strength was that participants were chosen by cognitive ability (IQ) rather than by traditionally recognized academic achievements. That meant that some participants were *not* at the top of their class; some were bored stu-

| Academic Competitions                                           | The Word Master’s challenge: http://www.wordmasterschallenge.com  
|                                                               | USA Computing Olympiad: http://www.uwp/sws/usaco  
|                                                               | Freedoms Foundation National Awards Program: http://www.freedomfoundati
|                                                                | nonational.asp  
| Online opportunities for connecting highly gifted learners with other highly gifted individuals | http://www.davidsongifted.org  
|                                                                | http://www.cogito.org  

**FIGURE 2: OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT HIGHLY GIFTED LEARNERS WITH EACH OTHER.**
Students, troublemakers, square pegs in round holes. But they were incredibly intelligent, inquisitive and eager to learn. Originality was valued over following pre-set rules, and that freed us to follow our hearts.

**Recommended practices.** Autonomy supportive practices include practices that allow for choice and responsibility. Gifted learners can be given meaningful choices not only about what they are learning, but how they learn. Freedom to explore new ideas, new technologies, and new ways of learning can be highly motivating. Personal freedom is also important. Faced with rigid authoritarian classroom structures, rules, and consequences, highly gifted learners may be come rebellious. Allowing opportunities to make decisions about how the classroom operates and to engage in problem solving when problems arise can promote the development of responsible self-directed learners.

**JOIE DE VIVRE**

A sense of humor is often noted as one of the characteristics of highly gifted individuals (Davis & Rimm, 2004) and mischievous behavior as a manifestation of creativity (Flieth, 2000). Even so, traditional school settings offer little opportunity for either. In fact, witty responses and creative pranks can be seen as “difficult” or problematic behavior. The participants in our research attested to an appreciation of high spiritedness and opportunity for fun and mischief making with their like-minded peers.

“I remember scaring the hell out of each other playing hide-and-go-seek in the bathrooms in Scott stadium and in the graveyard over behind Hunter Library! And those were some wild games of Truth or Dare! What fun memories!”

“The relaxed learning environment. The ability for gifted kids to mingle, mix, play, and learn without pressure, grades and stress. We also played some impressively witty pranks, and had dances and parties. Fun.”

At one time we were all told we had the potential to change the world. We were all told we were the smart ones, the ones that could be the final drop of water behind the wall that would tear the dike asunder. But...we’re just people. And gifted or not, we didn’t need to be told we were smart. We already knew that. We just needed a place to be crazy, and stupid, and to try and be the wicked little troublemaking Calvins and Hobbeses we knew we could be during the rest of the year but were too afraid to be.

**Recommended practices.** Highly gifted individuals are often perfectionists and subject themselves to unusually high standards. Opportunities for fun, light heartedness, and wittiness can alleviate the pressure of the high expectations they perceive from the adults in their lives and that they place on themselves. Time for more light-hearted activities can be interspersed throughout the day or week giving another outlet for high energy and creativity.

**CONCLUSION**

The further students deviate from the norm for their age, the more they require a differentiated curriculum and also strategies to deal with their asynchronous development. Although there is much variability within the highly gifted population there are some general practices that teachers can use. The classroom practices on p. 32 are suggested to go along with each theme that was found in our research.

**REFERENCES**


In the yearly comings and goings, it is possible for an individual to have encountered at least several extremely gifted people. Even though the probability is a low one-tenth of one percent—some parents and teachers would say thank goodness—the need for a positive educational plan exists; educational standards call for addressing academic, social, and emotional issues for all students.

Note this prescription by Christian Fischer in *Scientific American Mind* (August/September 2008): “Contrary to what many people believe, highly intelligent children are not necessarily destined for academic success. In fact, so-called gifted students may fail to do well because they are unusually smart. Ensuring that a gifted child reaches his or her potential requires an understanding of what can go wrong and how to satisfy the unusual learning requirements of extremely bright young people.”

This hands-on curriculum explores 1) major social and emotional pitfalls for highly gifted students, and 2) classroom adjustments to meet their unusual learning requirements.

The relationship of the highly gifted to the public is a complex mixture of social and emotional values. People try to simplify the situation with a label and a pedestal. Is there an unacknowledged message behind this singling out? What problems for society does it both solve and create? You have to know the components in order to intervene.

**THE PLAN**

In our “Responding to Failure” (Hands-on Curriculum, *GEC* Summer ’02), we delineated a framework for failure:

- **uphill** failure is the essential struggle toward a rational but difficult goal;
- **on-the-level** failure is achievement that is out of phase with society, either too far ahead or resting on its behind; and
- **downhill** failure is activity from which learning is no longer possible by the primary participant, but, nevertheless, a learning experience for the observers.

This lesson takes a closer look at that middle level of failure and the addressable areas where success goes awry. Debating the demons is essential to the highly gifted who are more likely to encounter them. Brainstorming interventions is workable after the characteristic is identified.

The concluding section of the lesson proposes modifications that enhance the classroom and the development of highly gifted students.

**GETTING STARTED**

Character flaws are always interesting—especially when they aren’t yours. Propose that the class carry out a compact study of several behaviors that get in the way of education, as well as provide the prime interest in literature, jokes, and daily life.

A loose-leaf binder can provide a flexible organizer for a collection of data, creative endeavors, and analyses of stumbling blocks. Ask students to make four sections labeled 1) Arrogant Attitude, 2) Unfocused Priorities, 3) Invulnerable Approach, and 4) Impractical Solutions. Each section will contain:

- definitions of the problematic behavior with notes from class discussions;
- examples from literature, news articles, plays, and cartoons;
- blog-style entries by students reacting to the character flaw;
- quotes for discussion; and
- brainstorming notes of possible interventions.

Ask students to be on the lookout for illustrative anecdotes to be included under each of the behavior headings. Examples can be found in the media, literature, and the Internet. Literary characters illustrate unquenchable hope versus eternal flaws.

In assembling this rogues’ gallery of wrongs, identify the problematic behavior and its cause. Make note of possible interventions or alternative solutions. Examples should be chosen for each of the four sections.

**SECTION ONE: ARROGANT ATTITUDE**

*Defining the Problematic Behavior.* Present a familiar example of arrogance to establish the characteristic: hubris, exaggerated pride or self-confidence, and a false sense of entitlement. One such example could be the sinking of the unsinkable ocean liner, as noted by Bernard Porter in the *Oxford Companion to British History*. “The ship’s band famously continued playing on the sloping deck as she sank, ending its selection with ‘Nearer, my God, to thee.’” The Titanic became a national symbol for both hubris—the problem, and courage—an intervention.

For younger students, explore the concept by asking for situations where a person is:
• wanting to feel in control without considering input from others;
• feeling entitled to unexamined acceptance of their ideas;
• taking longer to succeed than expected, leading to defensiveness;
• having unreasonable expectations, resulting in giving up or claiming to be bored; and
• failing to acknowledge the role of luck, taking full credit for coincidences.

For older students, expand the understanding by asking how arrogance and courage differ. How does the exaggerated pride or self-confidence of hubris add another dimension—another reason for ignoring reality?

Have all students record their notes and assemble any further defining examples from class discussion in their section on arrogance.

Conclude this opening part of the lesson by assigning a blog-style reaction illustrating the character flaw from one of the situations above. A chance to read this to the class should be offered.

*Quotes for Discussion and Intervention Brainstorming.* Complete this study of arrogance with input from the students’ blogs and consideration of some brief thoughts by established thinkers.

Sigmund Freud wondered at the ambiguity of being labeled a genius, a relationship with the public encompassing both admiration and suspicion: “Calling me a genius is the latest way people have of starting their criticism of me….If they thought I was a genius, one should think they would not question my authority.”

Shakespeare suggested that time might be a corrective, that a historical perspective can alter the foundation for pride: “But man, proud man, /dressed in a little brief authority, /most ignorant of what he's most assured….”

Begin a brainstorming session on interventions for arrogance. How can arrogance contribute to possible failure? Does “pride goeth before a fall?” How do you establish awareness in the primary suspect—instant replays for umpires? Is it easier to recognize in others?

Some possible interventions for an Arrogant Attitude:
1. Study the difference between arrogance and confidence.
2. Delegate real authority.
3. Find examples of checks and balances.
4. Recognize other points of view and contributions.
5. Form realistic expectations.

Record these and any additional interventions that come to the students’ mind or were tried in the examples they included in their notebooks.

Now that the format for the sections of this study has been established, the class should be comfortable fitting together the parts for the remaining sections and adding to their notebooks.

**SECTION TWO: UNFOCUSED PRIORITIES**

*Defining the Problematic Behavior.* Swept up in the enthusiasm for a new venture, highly gifted students often jeopardize success by not focusing their priorities. Picture the study area stacked with books and papers on a multitude of their latest interests. Is there a need to say no to yet another activity? Ask the students if they’ve ever been caught up in this scene. Have they ever had a meltdown caused by:
• over scheduling,
• letting a project get too involved, or
• procrastinating and failing to prioritize.

Students should now discuss these examples and any others that have been stimulated by class remarks. Record in the notebook section on Unfocused Priorities. Flesh them out with details from their experience. Follow with the blog assignment and a time to share and discuss.

*Quotes for Discussion and Intervention Brainstorming.* Deciding where to put one’s energy and time involves an intricate dance of resources—not even considering the two-step of actually getting something done once the choices are made. Theodore C. Sorensen expressed this check on our balance: “Consistently wise decisions can only be made by those whose wisdom is constantly challenged.”

James David Barber pointed out that the dance resulting from multiple challenges is a daily problem all the way up to the presidency: “Franklin D. Roosevelt learned to seek solutions which would not so much compromise among competing interests as transcend them, include them, give each at least something and the hope of more.”

Begin the brainstorming session on interventions for Unfocused Priorities:
1. Don’t bite off more than you can chew.
2. Monitor your time.
3. Adapt different strategies to accomplish different tasks.
4. Orchestrate the big picture.
5. Have a place for everything and everything in its place.
6. Seek independent analysis.

Additional suggestions can be found in the Hands-on lesson “Time Management—It’s Not Just Homework.” (GEC, Spring 2003).

**SECTION THREE: INVULNERABLE APPROACH**

*Defining the Problematic Behavior.* To be interesting, super heroes have to have a vulnerability. Even the top of the food chain has internal strife. A highly gifted student certainly isn’t immune, though they would argue that. Many a tombstone could be labeled “Hey fellas, watch this!” Discuss situations where students have been imperiled by:
• ignoring rules,
• taking impossible risks,
• being overly optimistic,
• overestimating their own abilities,
• thinking “it couldn’t happen to me,” or
• blaming others.

Students should amplify and record the examples as previously done, followed by the blog assignment and discussion of quotes.

*Quotes for Discussion and Intervention Brainstorming.* Walter Savage Landor wrote that somehow the place in our brain that stores information about risk is not accessed: “We often stand in need of hearing what we know full well.”
George Washington wrote that one reason for this blockage is the overriding excitement of peril: “I heard bullets whistle, and believe me, there is something charming in the sound.”

Begin the brainstorming on interventions for the Invulnerable Approach:

1. Recognize desire for risky behavior.
2. Analyze positive and negative effects of action.
3. Examine a Pyrrhic victory, where the cost outweighs any benefit.

Complete this section of the notebook by recording the interventions.

SECTION FOUR: IMPractical SOLUTIONS

Defining the Problematic Behavior. Though waving a magic wand or waking up from a bad dream can be a solution in literary plots, it isn’t likely to work in real life. Rube Goldberg became famous through his elaborate illustrations of complex machines to complete a simple action, an apt illustration of an Impractical Solution.

Sometimes people just keep going no matter how ridiculous things become. Students might have observed blinders such as:

- carrying out a foolishly impractical action,
- hoping for a silver bullet solution,
- trusting without verification, or
- believing a serious problem will disappear by itself.

As before, the class should discuss and amplify expressions of this behavior, recording the examples in the binder. Older students could look into the word “quixotic.”

Quotes for Discussion and Intervention Brainstorming. Mankind seems destined to attempt conquering difficult situations first with resolutions from over the rainbow—something magical. H. L. Mencken succinctly evaluated this approach: “There is always an easy solution to every human problem—neat, plausible, and wrong.”

Thomas A. Edison echoed this call for rational inquiry: “There is no expedition to which a man will not go to avoid the real labor of thinking.”

Begin the brainstorming on interventions for Impractical Solutions:

1. Initiate a hard-boiled analysis and run it by someone else.
2. Apply solutions even though uncomfortable.
3. Use the eraser/delete key/dumpster for things that don’t work.

Complete this final section on problematic behavior by recording the interventions in the binder. These interventions are not easy, which is why they are usually not high on the “to do” list. The completed notebook could be evaluated by the teacher and then shared with parents and kept at home for further additions and future reference.

UNUSUAL LEARNING REQUIREMENTS
OF EXTREMELY BRIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE

The final part of this hands-on lesson addresses accommodations that support the needs of both highly gifted students and their classmates.

A cooperative underlying current can be achieved by giving the students a voice in establishing the character and operation of the classroom. Details on setting-up this relationship can be found in our lesson “Buy-in on Gifted Classroom Rules.” (Hands-on Curriculum, GEC Summer ’04). Differences can become acceptable and supported.

Many highly gifted students do not attend public schools, instead favoring the greater adaptability of homeschooling or specialized programs. However, there are many for whom this is not possible. For them, differentiations are called for:

- providing for significantly advanced cognitive abilities,
- compacting and accelerating the curriculum,
- altering schedules to fit availability of outside advanced instruction,
- planning opportunities for sharing expertise with the class,
- assisting students in developing time management and study skills,
- encouraging interaction with their classmates, and
- recognizing the nonlinear grasp of material.

Advantages for the student. We, as public school teachers, have accommodated individuals who were also attending outside advanced classes, as well as occasional national and international competitions. School attendance and curricular requirements can be negotiated. Joint activities helped students to feel a part of the group, as opposed to feeling so different.

Advantages for the class. Appropriate provisions in the San Diego Unified School District program for the highly gifted have involved varied enrichments: chorus, stage productions, Latin, chess, art, and science. In-depth field studies have resulted in student films and journal records of learnings. Parents are an invaluable source of expertise. Class-wide fundraising and parent foundations can finance materials and instruction. Class culminations, often in conjunction with public libraries, bookstores, and museums, celebrated diverse growth in many endeavors—original publications, school performances, community displays, yearbook journals, and film/CDs.

The challenge comes in providing a classroom that has mutual respect and can honor each other’s achievement.

Opportunities for these solutions in the standard classroom are as rare as the highly gifted individuals themselves, but by embracing the occasional special situation, the teacher and the students can have a positive development.

ANN MACDONALD and JIM RILEY are the editors of the Hands-on Curriculum department of the Gifted Education Communicator. They taught in the San Diego City Schools’ Seminar program for the highly gifted.
Highly What?

Little girl...Sometimes they’ll give a war and nobody will come.

—Carl Sandburg from “The People, Yes”

I feel the same way about highly gifted as a topic. What if they had a gifted program and nobody knew? What if we could educate our children as our profession deems fit, and no one was envious or resentful because they didn’t know there was a program? There are a lot of what if’s in life.

Immediately go to the Hoagies’ Gifted Education website, hoagiesgifted.org and you will reread or relearn or learn for the first time everything you could want to know about highly gifted students, their problems, the degree of differences among the highly gifted, and what to do to address their needs.

I cannot and would not disagree with any of that wisdom.

But I wish it would disappear as a highlighted subject. I wish we could take care of these children properly without the heartaches.

There are heartaches, however, because these children are so rare and so finely tuned that the insensitivities of the world weigh upon them. They see and hear and feel what most people aren’t even aware of. Those heartaches remain into adulthood. They see and hear and feel what most people aren’t even aware of.

There must be some comfort within the school population to be taught decency. Michael Josephson’s Institute for Character Counts is one exception. Michele Borba’s books and Sylvia Rimm’s books help us all to deal with the realities of school and social interactions, and that is a salvation!

However, while we are acknowledging the special needs of such rare minds, is there nothing we can do to help these children have calmer lives? One of the definitions of calm in the Encarta World English Dictionary is “without wind or storm.” I would like to ease the storms. There must be some comfort within the demands made upon themselves as well as the demands made by a society that just doesn’t “get it.”

Anyone fortunate enough to be in classrooms in schools like the Davidson Institute surely must experience a comfort being in a place where others think and feel like you. I feel that comfort when I’m with a best friend. But what about our other profoundly gifted children who have no access to special environments? How can they be who they are and find that very same happiness and comfort level? Many answers to part of that question can be found on the Davidson Institute web site that has suggestions for everyone—students, parents, educators.

That Web site is a godsend for profoundly gifted children and their families. But I am searching for a feeling level that has no name. It is an intimacy that comes from being with those who understand and are like you. And it is this intimacy that I think will quell the angst that may come when our babes feel alone in their uniqueness.

I think my answer is found in a simple word: friend. If our highly, highly gifted have even just one friend who thinks and feels as they do, they could more easily face all of life’s tribulations because they would have company on the journey. Perhaps we should be connecting those students with each other, and then I wouldn’t have to say, “What if they had a gifted program and nobody knew?” because it wouldn’t matter.

A Friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of Nature. ——Ralph Waldo Emerson

Elaine S. Wiener is Associate Editor for Book Reviews for the Gifted Education Communicator. She is retired from the Garden Grove Unified School District GATE program and can be reached at 17elaine@att.net.
I recently visited Toby Manzanares’ classroom. I had read about integrative education for years, but I wanted to experience it with all my brain functions: thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition. His use of technology was astounding. Music set the mood. The agenda was posted on a 10’ x 10’ wall of light projected from the LCD at the back of the room, and as the lesson progressed, images provided the Gestalt for everything Toby said. At one point, all brain functions were engaged with a film clip of about 20 seconds. The student running the DVD player stopped at that precise moment of anticipation that elicited emotional reactions that were supported by intuitive predictions about the circumstances of the clip.

In another class, a scanned image of the female reproduction system was projected onto the larger-than-life area at the front of the room. Students and educator visitors created a shadow on the wall, as we became the human fallopian tube. We stood in two lines, facing each other with extended hands waving fingers to model the motile cilia. Toby tossed a soccer ball into the human “tube,” and our fingers moved it along. By acting out the action of an egg (soccer ball) moving along the fallopian tube (lines of students and educators standing face-to-face with extended hands), in the context of an image projected on the screen, we integrated all four brain functions in a lesson none of us will forget.

The day was a gift from Barbara Clark, whom I met in 1984 in the pages of my still-favorite book, Growing Up Gifted. I was trying to understand integrative education, and was asking questions about her book, Optimizing Learning. She told me about this classroom, and I spent a small fortune of district and per-
sonal money to take a team to see it. The learning on that one day was far deeper and lasting than any worksheet or video or Internet search.

Back in the district, Jeanne Elliott shared her copy of The Atlantic with the cover, “Is Google Making us Stoopid?: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains.” The article by Nicholas Carr had new meaning after the visit. In the article, Carr states, “Over the past few years I’ve had an uncomfortable sense that someone, or something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory. My mind isn’t going—so far as I can tell—but it’s changing. I’m not thinking the way I used to think” (July/August, 2008).

The question haunts me in my professional development for the GATE program, and as program leader in my work with beginning teachers (BTSA): How do we use technology in creative new ways that will integrate all brain functions and increase our intelligence?

When computers came into our classrooms in 1983, many of the applications were little more than electronic worksheets. There was novelty around this new “toy” in the classroom, and teachers began thinking about how technology might make learning easier. The question I’m beginning to ask about technology is similar to John F. Kennedy’s moon challenge in the 1960s: we need to do things not because they are easy, but because they are hard.

Sandra Kaplan speaks about initiating intellectual struggle. She recently shared a book that she had read, The Dumbest Generation, by Mark Bauerlein. While none of us drew any conclusions about the book or its findings, a statement on the webpage for the book sparked some interest: “The dawn of the digital age once aroused our hopes: the Internet, e-mail, blogs, and interactive and ultra-realistic video games promised to yield a generation of sharper, more aware, and intellectually sophisticated children. The terms ‘information superhighway’ and ‘knowledge economy’ entered the lexicon, and we assumed that teens would use their know-how and understanding of technology to form the vanguard of this new, hyper-informed era.”

Thus far technology has not lived up to its promise in relation to learning; however, I refuse to “give up” on technology. I believe that wise use can create more awareness and intellectual sophistication, but those skills have to be taught with a combination of the classic discourse in thinking coupled with methodology unique to the twenty-first century.

When I began teaching, we had colored worksheets for our students. They were purple, and mass produced on the “Ditto machine.” That was valuable technology, and created efficiencies in teaching that we tended to overuse. The biggest serendipity in my teaching career was the introduction to Bloom’s Taxonomy (1957), and the notion that knowledge and comprehension, even when applied to new situations, was not enough. We had to think analytically, creatively, and critically about the issues. While Bloom’s taxonomy and I are the same age, my 1983 training in those ideas was completely new to me. I could feel the dendritic explosions as I began asking questions and creating meaning almost as often as I sought information. It was in that same school year that I got my first computer: the TI 99/4A. It was an amazing machine because it would ask questions and evaluate responses. However, because I was in training to challenge students with more analytic, creative, and critical tasks, I decided that the best application of the new technology would be learning to program. I took classes at night and shared my learning with students the next day, and we tried new things that worked almost as often as they failed.

We moved to the Dallas area the next year, and those schools had whole labs of Commodore 64 computers. We were running the MIT Logo program on those computers, and students used the lab to progress through a series of modules beginning with foundational skills of keyboarding and language of the discipline. By the time they got to second grade, they were analyzing problems and synthesizing solutions, evaluating their product with a peer editor. When they left the school in sixth grade, they were programming cities with flying objects and cars that navigated streets, honking at the turns. Our students never saw anything as sophisticated as the virtual realities of this year’s latest games or “educational software,” but the computer was a tool for learning and creating—not for practicing and proficiency.

There are excellent programs available in today’s market that can be used as either a consumer or a creator. Lance Arnt has reviewed several Google applications, provided free, or at very low costs (Google Earth, Sketchup, Picasa, Maps, and Google Docs). In the next issue, I hope to explore “Scratch,” a new programming language that makes it easy to create your own interactive stories, animations, games, music, and art—and share your creations on the Web (retrieved September 2009, scratch.mit.edu). This program is being used by Rob Bolt at The Bayside STEM ACADEMY to teach design thinking to middle school students.

We share a responsibility as parents and educators of gifted students. Regardless of the software, we must find ways to integrate all brain functions in creative new ways so that students emerge from a technological experience with more intelligence instead of simply more knowledge. Looking back on Toby’s classroom, the film clips and iPod, and larger-than-life LCD projection were not the lesson—they were the support. It was the teacher who ultimately made the difference in the way the technology was used.

REFERENCES


Clark, B. (2008), Growing up gifted: Developing the potential of children at home and at school. (7th ed.). Saddle River, N.J: Merrill/Prentice Hall/Pearson.

BETH LITRELL, M.Ed. is a BTSA Advisor and Resource Specialist for GATE in the San Mateo-Foster City School District in California. She has worked with gifted students and their teachers for 24 years. She serves on the education committee for the California Association for the Gifted as well as a Parent Representative for the Bay Area.
Serving Highly Gifted Children

Highly gifted children stretch us and make us better people. Parents raising highly gifted children find they must learn and apply advocacy skills and learn many new topics just to keep up with their kids. Teachers of highly gifted children have an even harder task, challenging these amazing children in the classroom in addition to their entire regular teaching tasks. The good news for everyone is, thanks to the Internet, parenting and teaching gifted children is far easier than it used to be!

COMMUNITY

The first thing parents should know is that you are not alone! Raising highly gifted kids alone can be intimidating at times, but with the support groups on the Internet, there are plenty of people in the same position as you—and better still—plenty more who have made it past the age and stage you're dealing with and have all sorts of great ideas and suggestions describing what worked for them.

Families of the Talented And Gifted, TAGFAM, offers e-mail based support groups for families of the gifted. For homeschooling and after-schooling gifted families look for TAGMAX, and most important to the families of the highly gifted child, TAGPDQ will offer much to families of the “more than just plain gifted” child.

Similar to the TAGFAM list, GT-World offers a good general gifted mailing list called GT-Families. But their other offering is unique: GT-Special, a mailing support community for families of twice-exceptional children, children who are both gifted and learning disabled. When a child is both twice exceptional and highly gifted, parents may find themselves not fitting in with parents of generally gifted, highly gifted, or learning disabled parents, and their kids may find life even more complicated than we can imagine. GT-Special is a safe place for families to discuss problems, options, and what has proved successful for other families and might just work for you.

To join any of these gifted support communities, as well as many other local, state, national and international support communities, visit Hoagies’ On-Line Support, hoagiesgifted.org/on-line_support.htm#list.

For educators of the highly gifted, the Davidson Institute’s Educators Guild, educatorsguild.org is an amazing treasure of resources. The Educators Guild includes an e-mail support list for gifted teachers and administrators, but that’s just the tip of the iceberg. The Educators Guild also includes a newsletter, publications, and even free consulting. Educators, do not miss this resource!

RESEARCH AND IMPLEMENTATION

You’ll hear many opinions on educating gifted children and even more opinions on educating highly gifted kids. Some will be based in fact, others in emotion. But what does the research say, and how can we put that research into action?

The most straightforward and comprehensive research available on the education of highly gifted youth is found in the Templeton Foundation sponsored report A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America’s Brightest Students, nationdeceived.org. This two-volume report highlights the disparity between the research on acceleration and the educational beliefs and practices that often run contrary to the research. The first volume of A Nation Deceived includes the summary of the many forms of acceleration, and how each one can work for highly gifted students, while the second volume includes the full details of the research summarized in the first volume.

A Nation Deceived website also includes a full-color point-counterpoint poster on acceleration that you can print and share, personal stories, a third-year study of the effect of A Nation Deceived, and help for developing an acceleration policy in Guidelines for Developing an Academic Acceleration Policy, a joint IRPA (Institute for Research and Policy on Acceleration), and a NAGC (National Association for Gifted Children) publication released in November 2009. Volume 1 of A Nation Deceived is also available for international use in seven addition languages.

“The research is clear: when it comes to meeting the needs of gifted students, acceleration is effective and needs to be the cornerstone of a gifted program.” IRPA

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

The Internet isn’t exactly the first place you think of for social-emotional opportunities for highly gifted children, but you may be surprised by the large number of resources you will find in the great digital world. Davidson Young Scholars program, davidsonyoungscholars.org, is a unique support program for profoundly gifted kids who are the top end of highly gifted kids. Run by the Davidson Institute for Talent Development, the Davidson Young Scholars program provides free services designed to nurture and support profoundly gifted young people. Students and their parents receive assistance in the following areas: free consulting services, an online
community both for the kids and their parents, annual get-togethers, ambassador program, guidebooks, and more. I can’t say enough about the Davidson Young Scholars program. And from my family to the Davidsons for their Young Scholars program, all we can say is “Thanks!”

Academic Talent Search programs provide academic and social-emotional opportunities for highly gifted kids. There are four major talent searches in the United States: Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY), cty.jhu.edu, in the eastern and western states, Northwestern University’s Center for Talent Development (CTD), ctd.northwestern.edu, in the north-central states, Duke University’s Talent Identification Program (TIP), tip.duke.edu, in the south and central states, and the Center for Bright Kids’ Western Academic Talent Search (WATS), centerforbrightkids.org, in the Rocky Mountain states, along with several smaller talent search programs including Carnegie Mellon’s C-MITES, cmu.edu/cmites.

Ask a child who has attended a summer program with any of these Talent Search programs to identify his or her favorite thing, and you will get a wide variety of answers—often from a single child. Cool classes, kids who are “just like me,” Friday-night dances with the “canons”—songs handed down from one year’s students to the next—the weekend activities, fun and nerdy traditions, even the “re-ús”—reunions with the friends they made at camp, sometimes continuing years after their talent search years.

The Talent Search model starts with identification, using out-of-level achievement tests such as the Explore, an 8th and 9th grade level test given to 3rd to 5th grade gifted students, or the SAT or ACT, an 11th and 12th grade test given to 7th and 8th grade gifted students. By offering 3-to-5 years of headroom on grade-level achievement tests, the Talent Searches differentiate the top five percent of students into another standard deviation (on a bell curve), where those above the 50th percentile are generally accepted and successful in the school year and summer programs offered by the Talent Searches.

For some families, the inexpensive out-of-level testing offered by the Talent Searches is benefit enough. This testing can tell parents and teachers just how far above grade level a gifted student is achieving and usually comes with advocacy tips to help parents share the results of the testing with their child’s school and teachers. For other families, the distance education academic programs are a great alternative or supplement to traditional curriculum. For 5th grade to 16-year-old gifted kids, Talent Search summer programs held on college campuses around the country are often the few weeks of the year that makes waiting through the rest of the year worthwhile. Many Talent Searches also offer summer commuter programs for younger kids.

For parents and educators, Talent Search websites also offer research and articles on the education and social-emotional lives of gifted children.

Also on the Internet, visit Hoagies’ Gifted Conferences, hoagiesgifted.org/conferences.htm, to find conferences and gatherings across the country and around the world that often include parallel children’s programs. These conferences and programs are an easy way to help your child spend social time with other gifted children. Conferences may offer only a kids program, or include a teen or young adult program as well. The SENG (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted), www.sengifted.org, conference offers kids and teen programs, a great option for both younger and older gifted kids.

SCHOOLS

Each highly gifted child is unique with talents and interests, family, school options, teachers, and gifted programs; it is difficult to state that any particular school will work for all highly gifted students. That said, there are a couple of schools especially created for highly gifted students. EPGY Online High School (OHS) and the Davidson Academy of Nevada take two very different approaches to educating the highly gifted student.

EPGY Online High School, epgy.stanford.edu/ohs, is a fully accredited, diploma granting, online independent school situated at Stanford University, serving grades 7-12. As an online school, EPGY OHS offers a solution for highly gifted kids who would otherwise skip to college without a diploma, who live in rural areas or have less than optimal local school options, those who live overseas, and others. But do not assume kids who attend EPGY OHS are isolated or only have friends on the computer—it’s not true. EPGY OHS students have their own online and real life communities in addition to all the friends and connections the students make in their local area in extra-curricular activities. EPGY OHS also offers summer sessions that compliment their online courses and virtual labs with seminars and wet labs on the Stanford campus.

The Davidson Academy of Nevada, www.davidsonacademy.unr.edu, is a free public school for profoundly gifted middle and high school students. The Academy was established through state legislation in 2005 designating it as a “university school for profoundly gifted pupils.” Located on the University of Nevada, Reno campus, Academy students attend middle and high school classes at the Academy, and may access university courses for advanced studies. While at The Davidson Academy, each student participates in developing and implementing a Personalized Learning Plan that serves as a roadmap for academic and personal goals, as well as future opportunities.

HIGHLY INTERESTING

Highly gifted kids may at times seem highly challenging to raise and educate, but with guidance and freedom to learn, a little flexibility, and access to the many resources available on the Internet today, we can help guide them to become happy and productive adults.

KIDS KORNER (FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES!)

Visit the Contemporary Physics Education Project (CPEP), cpepweb.org, and view, order or (free for teachers and students) print out any of their posters, including The Standard Model of Fundamental Particles and Interactions, showing the current understanding of quantum physics, or the History and Fate of the Universe, including the four eras and eight major stages in the evolution of the universe, among other posters.
While you’re on a Physics kick, visit The Particle Adventure, particleadventure.org, for a tour of quarks, neutrinos, antimatter, and much more interesting physics of our present and future. Along with the physics, pick up historical background: How did our ancestors explain the physical world? Get a glimpse of the future—what are the unsolved mysteries in front of us? But don’t assume The Particle Adventure is just for our budding scientists. I learned a great deal just reviewing the site, and now that I’ve seen it in The Particle Adventure, quantum physics is starting to make sense!

Want to compare things? Ask Diffen, diffen.com. What’s the difference between weathering and erosion? Between a psychologist and a psychiatrist? Between Poseidon and Zeus? Between the usage of “that” and “which”? Or use @Random to compare something completely random… it’s interesting to see what Diffen comes up with! Diffen also compares products, including computer processors, cameras, cell phones, GPS devices and more. What’s the difference? Find out on Diffen!

Cooking for Engineers, cookingforengineers.com, is a different approach to good recipes. Their slogan says it all: “Have an analytical mind? Like to cook? This is the site to read!” Nearly 100 recipes from appetizer to dessert are all laid out in just the style an engineer would like, with step-by-step written and pictured instructions, and a simple chart of the whole process, too.

Cooking for Engineers is not just recipes. You can also find cooking tests, such as a taste test between the HFCS (High Fructose Corn Syrup) Free Cream Sodas, or a taste test between “beer can chicken” using beer vs. using water for the steaming liquid. These are just the things a good engineer would enjoy! Find Equipment & Gear comparisons and experiments, and other high-tech cooking conversations, too.

Multiplication.com, multiplication.com/interactive_games.htm, has something for everyone trying to learn those pesky times tables. Try your skill at a wide variety of interactive multiplication games, from Pizza Pizzaz, mice delivering pizzas—earn your own made-to-order pizza, to Math Models, girls trying on fashion clothing—earn your skin tones, hair styles, fashions clothes, socks and shoes, and then play dress up yourself. There are 36 different games including 3 sets of interactive flashcards, with animation to keep every child interested. Also try the free base version of Timez Attack, for facts from 2 to 12. It’s a safe download of a stand-alone game for Windows or Mac, plus a coupon for the full version if you’d like to upgrade.

CAROLYN KOTTMeyer is the founder and director of Hoagies’ Gifted Education Page hoagiesgifted.org and Hoagies’ Kids and Teens Page hoagieskids.org. Carolyn can be seen on Twitter @HoagiesGifted. Serving again on the board of SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted), she is a winner of the 2008 SENG Service Award, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Community Service Award, and the Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE) Neuber-Pregler Award.
My parents would frisk me before we went to a family gathering, like a wedding or a bar mitzvah, because they assumed I had a book on me somewhere. And they were right; I’d usually spend the day under a table reading.


What a great way to describe himself as a reader! Gaiman, a voracious reader and writer since he was young, often comments on the role that books have had in his life. For more on Gaiman, his life as a reader and writer, visit http://www.neilgaiman.com. It would be a great goal to create environments for kids to feel that school is a wonderful place for reading—and not just the books you are supposed to read, but a safe place where you don’t have to sneak a book that you love and read under a table. A place where all books are good books.

In his recent book, Readicide: How Schools are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It, Kelly Gallagher presents the irony of how the current reading curriculum in schools may be decreasing students’ desire to read because of the emphasis on test preparation and “overteaching” of texts that kids would not choose to read. As you consider how you might create lifelong readers during this school year, consider what you might do to create environments for kids to feel that school is a wonderful place for reading—and not just the books you are supposed to read, but a safe place where you don’t have to sneak a book that you love and read under a table. A place where all books are good books.

Setting the Stage for Reading Beyond the Classroom

Strategies and Titles to Explore

For the most part, they want to be able to make their own decisions about reading and rather than be taught how to dissect a text and identify the author’s intent, they want to navigate the big ideas in the text. The goal for able readers is to create natural reading moments. These may be planned or unplanned. They are by definition times when students choose to read both in and out of school. Yet, schools are consistently decreasing the ways in which they support reading in schools. Students are asked to read novels in segments and strategies that respect advanced learners as a readers, they diminish opportunities for the students. For example, these students may need to be exposed to different genres and the characteristics of genre or how to navigate the story as told from text and images.

Over the years, I have interviewed dozens of highly able readers, ages 6-16, and they have been consistent with their comments about what frustrates them about reading in schools. These are the characteristics that describe their needs and wants.

• Have access to many different types of books and the freedom to choose their own books to read. They may not want to use the leveling book system to determine what they want to read but may choose books out of interest in the topic, genre, or author.
• Read at a pace that they determine. They want to be able to read a book in one sitting or in a single day. They often do not enjoy reading books in 20 page or chapter chunks.
• Not be required to prove that they read each book by completing a project/report for each book.
• Have opportunities to talk with other readers about the books and the ideas in the books.
• Be given the option to not reread a book that is part of a class or group focus because they have already read it. They want to be able to read another book with the same ideas or themes.

For most part, they want to be able to make their own decisions about reading and rather than be taught how to dissect a text and identify the author’s intent, they want to navigate the big ideas in the text. The goal for able readers is to create natural reading moments. These may be planned or unplanned. They are by definition times when students choose to read both in and out of school. Yet, schools are consistently decreasing the ways in which they support reading in schools. Students are asked to read novels in segments.
and dissect every aspect to identify words that they don’t know and consider the author’s intent. However, when you talk to adult readers about what they read, they share ideas and connections they made and rarely tell you that they learned a new word. If we want kids who are already reading to continue to read, then we may need to replicate reading opportunities that are less about using the text as a learning tool for every reading and writing skill but more focused on capturing the spirit of reading where the motivation to read is pure.

In a recent conversation with the mother of four boys who are voracious and precocious readers, she described her 10-year-old reader, Sagan, and his reading habits. When he is reading and eating, he wants a book he has read before; when he reads in the afternoon, he wants a book that is new to him and may be challenging; and when he reads at night, he wants to read or listen to something that is comforting and familiar. Recently spotted in Sagan’s reading pile were all the Henry Reed books by Keith Robertson, *The Home School Liberation League* by Lucy Frank, *The Shadow Thieves* by Ann Ursu and *The Star of Kazan* by Eva Ibbotson, *Thimble Summer* by Elizabeth Enright, the *Velvet Room* by Zilpha Keatley Snyder, and *The Green Glass Sea* by Ellen Klages among other titles. I can’t help but wonder how teachers might create such readers—the ones for whom reading is a satisfying and lifetime habit that begins before they enter school and hopefully continues for a lifetime.

The National Endowment for the Arts report, *To Read or Not to Read* (2007), found that students who read more for fun did better on standardized tests. This is no surprise to many educators. Reading has long been associated with increased test scores, larger vocabularies, increased general knowledge, and even strong problem-solving abilities. So, for the kids who come to school reading, how do we, as educators, create reading moments that will support their love of reading while exposing them to the wide variety of worlds that books offer? When it comes to reading instruction, there is much debate about the components of the best reading instruction. When it comes to connecting kids and books, there is less debate. We know that kids who read and read well are more successful in school. Therefore, we need to create moments that motivate kids to read.

Here are a few tried and true suggestions for creating reading moments that motivate students to read.

- Consider that not all texts have to be read in numerical page order. While many teachers encourage students to read stories as they evolve, they may miss the opportunity to model that there are times when a novel reads well by reading the first chapters and then the last chapters to determine where the novel is headed. For some voracious readers, this will provide the motivation to read; this approach is much like when you travel you often set the destination and then determine the route.

- Generate book gossip-talking about books and the people who created them. For example, J.R.R. Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit* to create a place for Elvish to be spoken, or the idea for *The Hobbit*. For information about books and the people who created them, many creators have websites that can be found by using [www.firstnamelastname.com](http://www.firstnamelastname.com) such as [www.katedicamillo.com](http://www.katedicamillo.com) or [www.matttavares.com](http://www.matttavares.com).

- Have students “speed date” with books to determine what they want to read. One way to speed date is to make 5-7 different texts available and have students read each title for no more than 3-5 minutes. After previewing the titles, ask them to make a list of the books that they want to read cover-to-cover. This may be done with many different combinations of texts such as all books that are new in the library, all books that explore the same big idea, all books by the same author, for example, Kate DiCamillo, Sid Fleischman, or M. T. Anderson. It could also be by format such as poetry collections, novels in verse or graphic novels; it could even be books from different genres that explore the same big ideas or concepts such as survival, change, or identity.

- Read the first chapter or the last chapter of a book aloud to students, but don’t finish it. It may be that students will need to go to a classroom or school library to find it and finish it.


- Start a literary lunch club where students who want to read books and talk about them may do so by sitting at the same table. For example, you could put a table tent on a lunch table that reads Have you read….? Sit here on Thursday.

- Create literary graffiti on a wall or on craft paper attached to a wall. Print off the book covers of books the kids choose to read and have them sign their names by the books.

- Consider how you use read-aloud time to invite readers to new texts. Throughout the year diversify the read-aloud to include books across genres and at different independent reading levels. Suggestions include reading a great biography, samples from a poetry collection, a short story from a collection such as *Best Shorts: Favorite Stories for Sharing* or *Guys Write for Guys Read* to introduce an author, playing an audio recording or pod cast of a story. Also, consider reading nonfiction as part of the read-alouds. Titles such as *You Never Heard about Sandy Koufax*? (check out the holographic cover which is just the beginning of this stunning insider’s view of baseball) will change how students view nonfiction.

As you consider the books to be read this year, remember that not all the books will need to be taught. In fact, if they are reading it for the pure enjoyment, then I usually avoid teaching about it in class unless my students want to connect it to what they are reading in class. Instead, consider highlighting books they have not yet found.

Here are some new titles that may by themselves generate inter-
For those who have been waiting for the sequel to Hunger Games (2008), Catching Fire (Scholastic) came out on September 1, 2009 and it will not disappoint any reader who wondered about Katniss and her life after the games. Readers will definitely be asking for the third book as soon as they finish the last line about District 12.

For an exuberant picture book introduction to debate and perception, check out Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenfeld’s latest collaboration, Duck! Rabbit! with its fresh visual twist on the old debate as to whether the image in the drawing is a duck or a rabbit. Another new picture book that will be fun for sharing is The Hair of Zoe Fleefenbacher Goes to School by Laurie Halse Anderson. Zoe and her exuberant and talented hair heads to first grade where the rules are not going to keep Zoe’s free-spirited hair out of first grade adventures.

From picture books to early reader graphic novels, Jarrett Krosoczka will delight and ignite young graphic novel readers with Lunch Lady and the Cyborg Substitute and Lunch Lady and the League of Librarians. This is a new graphic novel series that may appeal to young readers who have fun with lunch-related mysteries and more.

For readers who have been following the incredible and brain puzzling adventure, The Mysterious Benedict Society in the first two books by Trenton Lee Stewart, The Mysterious Benedict and the Prisoner’s Dilemma came out on October 6, 2009 in a lay down—when the publisher is strict about the sale date for a title such as when the last Harry Potters titles were not available until a specific date. In this nefarious plot, readers will find Reynie, Kate, Sticky, and Constance in another adventure complete with mind-bending brain teasers.

As you consider the reading growth of those students who are already able readers, consider creating the motivation to read by making these students restless for more books to explore and discover. For a poem to encourage the sharing of books, Richard Peck (2000) wrote a poem, Twenty Minutes a Day about reading to kids; it is available at http://us.penguingroup.com/nf/Author/AuthorPage/0,0,1000025091,00.html. Also, don’t miss learning more about the memorable Grandma Dowel from his Newbery winning, A Year Down Yonder, and the Newbery honor book Long Way from Chicago in her third feature role in A Season of Gifts published in October 2009.

SUSANNAH RICHARDS, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of education at Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic, CT. She is co-chair of the Middle Schools Division for the National Association for Gifted Children. Additional interests include finding, reading, and collecting books; cooking, sewing, gardening and traveling. She can be reached at richardss@easternct.edu.
Academic Advocacy for Gifted Children

Barbara Jackson Gilman

paperback, $24.95, 358 pp.

REVIEWED BY ELAINE WIENER

What a package! Academic Advocacy for Gifted Children is advertised as a book for parents. Not true. It seems like it’s everything for everyone: all that a parent needs to know for their gifted child; all that a teacher wants to know about the topic of gifted education, including many details of how and what to teach these children; certainly what administrators should know about gifted children in their school district; and if a smart superintendent or politician wants to be in the know, they should carry this book around. It is a book for all seasons!

What about the professional educator of the gifted who has been in the business for decades? That person, above all, should buy this book to see where he or she has been. It’s a gifted education organized; it’s facts and strategies forgotten or lost in the shuffle or presented for those new to the field. Bravo!!!

In addition, this book is written with style. It flows. It’s easy—to read, not to have written. It’s a Legacy Book Winner and Forward Magazine’s Book of the Year. Those awards are well deserved.

Barbara Jackson Gilman starts her book with these words:

This book could only have been written by a parent. No amount of training in issues of the gifted or generalized desire to help gifted students could create the insistence that fuels this book. That can only come from the outrage that a parent feels when a child has been hurt.

Any parent can relate to that statement, and a teacher who has no children of her own can feel the passion.

And so the story begins with what happened to Ms. Gillman’s family in their search for an appropriate education for her son. Woven into that story is the story of giftedness. This is not one of those whining tales of things gone wrong because Ms. Gillman is an educator herself and then also became an expert in gifted education.

Each chapter is divided into very small detailed categories, easily found when looking in the table of contents. It is truly a handbook.

Chapter 1. The Experience of Giftedness
Chapter 2. What Do We Mean by Gifted?
Chapter 3. Testing Considerations
Chapter 4. Curriculum and Instruction
Chapter 5. Underachievement: When a Child is Too Advanced for the Educational Program
Chapter 6. Underachievement: Gifted Children with Learning Disabilities or other Deficits
Chapter 7. Successful Programs for Gifted Students
Chapter 8. Models of Advocacy for Parents
Chapter 9. Teachers of the Gifted
Chapter 10. Charter Schools—In Principle and Practice
Chapter 11. Planning Your Child’s Program—Year by Year (The Answers!)

After reading this, you will be a tactful, knowledgeable, but ferocious advocate for your child.

ELAINE S. WIENER is Associate Editor for Book Reviews for the Gifted Education Communicator. She is retired from the Garden Grove Unified School District GATE program and can be reached at 17elaine@att.net.
Living With Intensity
By Susan Daniels & Michael Piechowski, Eds.
paperback, $26.95, 260 pp.

REVIEWED BY MARGARET GOSFIELD

Living With Intensity is an exceedingly readable book.
I must confess that in the past I have often found Dabrowski materials tough going and despaired that time devoted to reading them did not result in real understanding. The subtitle of the book is very apt as it indeed captures the spirit and fact of the book: Understanding the Sensitivity, Excitability, and Emotional Development of Gifted Children, Adolescents, and Adults. I believe that for the first time I truly understand the essential aspect of Dabrowski’s levels and his theory of the process of development.

Living With Intensity presents theories, examples, and strategies with a clarity and evenness that is remarkable in a collected work with numerous authors. The editors, Susan Daniels and Michael Piechowski, laid out the book in four sections:
1. Kazimierz Dabrowski, Overexcitability, Giftedness, and Developmental Potential
2. Understanding Intensity: Practical Applications for Parents, Teachers, and Counselors
3. Still Gifted After All These Years—Lifespan Intensity and Gifted Adults
4. Current Research and Future Directions

In Part One, Daniels and Piechowski lay the groundwork by clearly describing and explaining Dabrowski and his theory of “overexcitabilities” and “positive disintegration.” The succeeding chapters present the multi-faceted parts of the Dabrowski theory and its application by such well-known figures in the field as Elizabeth Meckstroth, Annemarie Kooper, Linda Silverman, Ellen Fiedler, Stephanie Tolkan, and others, each addressing a specific and critical aspect of the whole.

For me, four important ideas emerge.
1. Overexcitabilities and levels of development are essential parts of highly gifted individuals and are equally as important as their cognitive abilities.

2. Overexcitabilities are not pathological and it is counterproductive to treat them as something to be eliminated or “cured.”

3. Dismissal of a child or adolescent’s overexcitabilities as irrational or unimportant can lead to serious and long-lasting harm.

4. Understanding gifted adults is essential as well because youngsters carry their childhood intensities into adulthood where they have the potential to make significant contributions to the whole of society.

My copy of Living with Intensity is filled with underlinings of significant comments regarding the complexities of highly and profoundly gifted learners; I believe that it is important reading for all of us who serve as advocates for gifted learners—including the learners themselves.

MARGARET GOSFIELD has worked in the field of gifted education for more than 30 years as a teacher, program coordinator, and editor.

Exceptionally Gifted Children, 2nd Edition
By Miraca U.M. Gross
paperback, $57.50, 307 pp.
ISBN 0415314917

REVIEWED BY MARGARET GOSFIELD

Miraca Gross’ Exceptionally Gifted Children has been a classic in the field since the first edition came out in 1993. It is a rare, in-depth, longitudinal study of highly, exceptionally, and profoundly gifted children attending elementary and secondary schools in Australia during the 1970s and 1980s.

Her study began with 40 children of which she presented case studies of 15 children in the first edition. For the second edition she added three more children to the text and brought all of their histories forward an additional 10 years as outlined in the chapter, “Where are they now?”

It is an eye-opening experience to read the descriptions of the mistreatment these young people endured in school—especially those who were not permitted to skip grades. The chapter on “School History” is particularly interesting in that respect. She also brings out the participants’ early development and physical health, family history, and academic achievements. Perhaps most disheartening are the problems the children faced in their psychosocial development.

There is also an interesting chapter and many asides throughout the book on the status of gifted education and attitudes toward gifted children in Australia where they appear even more negative than in the United States. The chapter, “Gifted Education in Australia,” notes the “peculiarly Australian urge to ‘cut down the tall poppies.’” Gross describes Australians as having “extreme egalitarian” characteristics—possibly stemming from their origin in the late 18th Century as a British penal colony. Thus the calls for not only equal opportunity but also equal results meaning that all those who stand above the rest need to be “cut down.” But as in the United States, they make exceptions for sports stars where elitism is not only tolerated but celebrated.

More important for American readers are the conclusions Gross draws from her studies and the recommendations she makes for serving highly and profoundly gifted children appropriately. This is particularly spelled out in the chapter, “The exceptionally gifted: Recognition and Response.”

Among the elements she considers vital are:

• identification instruments with unusually high ceilings or use of off-level tests
• acceleration
• social interaction with other highly or profoundly gifted children

Gross comments,

Perhaps the greatest gift we can give to a gifted child is a teacher who recognizes the gift, who is not threatened by it but rather rejoices in it and who works with joy to foster it. Few of the children in this study have encountered such a teacher.

MARGARET GOSFIELD has worked in the field of gifted education for more than 30 years as a teacher, program coordinator, and editor.
Dr. B’s Science Destinations

A Series of Year-Round Dynamic Programs in Which Science, Technology and Research are Combined to Give Participants First-Hand Experience in Laboratories With Scientists

BIOLOGY-CHEMISTRY-PHYSICS-EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE-HEALTH SCIENCE-ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE-AVIATION SCIENCE-NANO SCIENCE-COMPUTER SCIENCE-ROBOTICS

Local one-day programs to international travel where we visit unique sites, talk, question, challenge and work with local and international scientists on current issues and problems of planet Earth. Field workshops are educational, hands-on experience designed to inspire, engage and empower participants to investigate, observe, explore and discover the world of science. Summer Field Enrichment Programs are also offered to science teachers! Earn university course credit in Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Earth Science as you explore some of the most unique, beautiful and scientifically rich locations across the globe. Join us for international travel opportunities that offer content, field research and practical application experiences for the classroom teacher. Accrue university credit that can be applied to NCLB "highly qualified" teacher certification.

IT’S ALL ABOUT KIDS, PARENTS AND SCIENCE

ENROLL NOW

SCIENCE DESTINATIONS IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE BEST PREMIER SCIENCE PROGRAM IN THE NATION

LIMITED ENROLLMENT: Ages 9 - 14 & Families and siblings on selected trips
8:00am to 4:30pm local trips. Trips away from home: 8 to 16 days.

We have traveled to Florida, Hawaii, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, Wyoming, Utah, Texas, New Mexico, Canada, Mexico, The Galapagos Islands, South Africa, Costa Rica and Midway Atoll

Write or call Richard A. Boolootian, Ph.D.
3576 Woodcliff Road, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403-5045
818.981.3473 Fax 818.501.7855

Visit Science Destinations Web Site for more information and tour our current evenings, Saturdays, Weekends, Winter, Spring and Summer Science Programs

www.sciencedestinations.org
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

If you are not already a CAG member, please use the application below to become a continuing supporter of gifted education. CAG is active in lobbying efforts to promote appropriate education for gifted and talented students and assigns $5.00 of each membership to CAG/PAC, CAG’s Political Action Committee. Dues payments are not tax deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

Name: ___________________________ Last  First  Middle Initial

Preferred Mailing Address: ___________________________________________________________

City / State / Zip : ____________________________________________ Calif. County: __________

E-Mail Address: _____________________________________________ Preferred Phone: (_____) ____________

School District: _____________________________________________

Membership/Service Category
☐ Individual ($75)
☐ 2-year Individual ($140)
☐ Family ($85)
☐ Life ($1000)
☐ Institution ($100)
☐ Credential Program Student ($50)

Advisor Signature: __________________________________________

☐ Limited Income ($25) ____________________________

Gifted Education Communicator — subscription only ($45)

(For mailing addresses outside the U.S., please add $15)

Role
☐ Administrator/Coordinator
☐ Board of Education Member
☐ Consultant
☐ Counselor/Psychologist

☐ Grandparent
☐ Parent
☐ Teacher
☐ Other

Special Skills/Interests
☐ Art/Music
☐ Humanities
☐ Advocacy/Legislation
☐ Math
☐ Other
☐ Science

California Foundation for Gifted Education was formed in July of 2006 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. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation.

☐ I also wish to make a tax-deductible contribution in the amount of $ ________________ to the California Foundation for Gifted Education.

Payment
☐ Personal Check #: ___________________________

☐ District Check #: ___________________________

☐ Purchase Order #: __________________________

CHARGE: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

Card #: ___________________________ Exp. Date: ____________

Signature: ___________________________

Please mail with check or charge information to:
California Association for the Gifted, 9278 Madison Avenue, Orangevale, CA 95662

Phone: 1-916-988-3999  e-mail: CAGOffice@aol.com  website: www.CAGifted.org