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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the four issues of the newsletter "Gifted Education Press Quarterly" published during 1995. This newsletter addresses issues in the education of gifted children and youth. The major articles are: (1) "Using Today's Technology: Parents Can Help Challenge Gifted Children" (Adrienne O'Neill); (2) "Outcomes-Based Education Opportunity Knocks for Real Gifted Program Improvement!" (Bruce Gurcsik); (3) "Towards Excellence and Justice for All: A Response to Schroeder-Davis" (an author, Mara Sapon-Shevin, responds to a review of her book); (4) "Tribute to a Great American Humorist, James Thurber (1894-1961)" (Michael E. Walters); (5) "The Lords of Fly: Finding Teen-Age Black and Hispanic Gifted Students" (Diane D. Grybek); (6) "A Teacher's Observations on Discrimination against Gifted Children" (Leigh A. Shelton); (7) "Response to Mara Sapon-Shevin's Comments in the Winter 1995 GEPQ" (Michael E. Walters); (8) "Using Quotations To Challenge Gifted Students" (Ross Butchart); (9) "Outcomes for Gifted Learners: Selections from New Book" (Patricia A. Gabriel, Ann M. DeYoung, and Sandra K. Bajema); (10) "Multiculturalism and the Gifted Student" (Michael E. Walters); (11) "Books: A Basic Gifted Program" (Judith Wynn Halsted); (12) "Using the Internet: An Electronic Resource for Gifted Students, Their Parents and Teachers" (Adrienne O'Neill and Mary Ann Coe); (13) "Apollo 13: A Space Mission in Giftedness" (Michael E. Walters). (Some articles contain references.) (DB/LC)

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In the Fall of 1994, the United States Department of Education issued its sixteenth annual report on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The findings concerning inclusion in the regular classroom are very disturbing. Although one-third of handicapped students participated in the regular classroom 80% or more of their school time, they were more likely to fail a class than peers who spent 50% or less in the regular classroom. Of course, the federal bureaucrats say this finding proves that regular classroom teachers need more supports to successfully educate handicapped children. However, a more meaningful interpretation is that regular education teachers are buried in the task of working with too wide of a range of ability and social levels. It may not be humanly possible to effectively teach seriously handicapped, average, above average and gifted students in the same classroom. It has only been in the last few years that this common sense idea has been challenged.

Clearly, this federally sponsored study has serious implications for teaching the gifted in the regular classroom. It may well be that as a result of inclusion and other reformist initiatives, large numbers of gifted children across the country are suffering from a lack of academic stimulation in the regular classroom. (In fact, a high percentage may be failing or barely passing courses as a result of boredom and rebellion.) If this is the case, we should not blame regular classroom teachers because they are (in most cases) trying to deal with an impossible situation. In any event, federal and state governments should sponsor more extensive national and statewide studies on the impact of inclusion on gifted students. Dr. Karen Rogers (1991) has shown that grouping gifted children for instruction is very effective. It is important to have follow-up studies to Dr. Rogers' work that examine the academic and psychological impact of placing gifted children back into the regular classroom after differentiated programs have been disbanded or decreased in intensity.

Jacob K. Javits *Gifted and Talented Students Education Program*. In the Friday, October 28, 1994 *Federal Register*, the United States Department of Education proposed that at least 75% of its funds for this program should be directed toward sponsoring innovative education projects in low-income schools. Approximately 25% of the remaining funds would be used to provide technical assistance to schools regarding how to adapt gifted education techniques to all students. We have no particular objection to using federal funds in this manner as long as they produce valid

results that can be applied to the entire gifted field. The crucial questions are: how will these projects be evaluated, and who will do the evaluating? We highly recommend that an independent group outside of gifted education is hired to evaluate these projects, e.g., companies around the Washington, D.C. Beltway, or educational research companies in North Carolina or California.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). We have learned today (November 12, 1994) from *The Washington Post* that a set - 72 pages - of Leonardo's writings, including discussions of hydrodynamics and paleontology, was sold by Christie's Auction House for \$30.8 million! (The purchaser was a genius of the 20th century, Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft Corporation.) Although Western civilization still values this great Italian genius, a recent 314-page report, "National Standards for World History: Exploring Paths to the Present" (sponsored by such groups as the American Historical Association and the National Council for History Education), encourages history teachers to ignore the contributions of da Vinci and other similar white European males. Maybe history teachers of the gifted should ignore this report!

We are particularly pleased to publish this issue and would like to dedicate Dr. Adrienne O'Neill's article to the parents of gifted children who are seeking alternative means of educating their children. Her analysis and recommendations concerning how to effectively use computers with gifted children should help to stimulate more widespread use of computer software in differentiated instruction. Dr. O'Neill is currently Assistant Professor of Education at William Patterson College in Wayne, New Jersey. Prior to this position, she was Superintendent of Bernards Township Public Schools in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. Dr. Bruce Gurcsik has written many articles for *GEPQ*, and his current article shows how Outcomes-Based Education can be adapted to gifted education. Please note that in the Summer 1994 issue, we published "Outcomes for Gifted Learners Through Using Virgil S. Ward's Differentiated Curriculum" by Gabriel, DeYoung and Bajema. Use both articles to help design OBE for the gifted! We present Dr. Mara Sapon-Shevin's response to Stephen Schroeder-Davis' critique of her book. We invite all readers to send us their reactions about the inclusion debate - pro and con. Dr. Michael Walters writes about the humorist, James Thurber, who had an enormous impact on writing in America.

Maurice D. Fisher

Publisher

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USING TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY: PARENTS CAN HELP CHALLENGE GIFTED CHILDREN
 BY ADRIENNE O'NEILL COLLEGE OF WILLIAM PATTERSON WAYNE, NJ

INTRODUCTION

Gifted students have innate intelligence, but they need opportunities to learn and grow beyond the attainment of basic skills. The practical realities of public education in the 1990s dictate that parents must play a larger role in providing for these opportunities. If parents learn and use today's technology with the gifted child, growth and development are sure to follow. Parents may wish to share their findings with the school and cooperatively work with other parents to further the education of all gifted children.

Today's technology, including the use of computers and appropriate software as tools for learning, has great potential for stimulating the individual child and for establishing a cooperative program to challenge gifted students. Examples of how to use technology and/or computer software as tools to encourage and help gifted students access and acquire information, stimulate divergent thinking, increase the production of creative products, use a mentor and use the power of fiber optic networks are outlined in this article. After you try some of these ideas, you will generate ideas of your own which you may wish to share with other parents and the teachers in the school district.

WHY MUST PARENTS OF GIFTED CHILDREN HELP TO CHALLENGE THEIR CHILDREN?

Despite the political rhetoric that bemoans low SAT scores, encourages high standards and purports to recognize the power of education as a necessary component for stimulating economic growth through increased productivity, there is no unified policy on education in the United States.

Programs are different in every local school district and in every state in the United States. Local debates rage about the basic curriculum, books to use, ban, or censor, acceptable methods and materials to be used in classrooms, the types of awareness programs to use to promote self-esteem and political correctness, and the level of social services to be provided to needy families. School Board meetings are replete with complaints about the food in the school cafeterias and the location of bus stops but noticeably absent are debates about how best to stimulate thinking in the classroom. Improvement of academic performance does not usually appear as a topic on the agenda.

The only nationwide philosophical agreement appears to be that schools can do more with less as they teach the basic skills to all students. Parents are only twenty-five percent of the voting public in most school districts and the majority prevails in thinking that if the parents want more, they should privately, and preferably quietly, provide it for their children.

Some think that competition will improve schools. School choice has now reached the discussion stage in many states, but it will be years before we see widespread use of vouchers or choice programs, and years after that before we know the effectiveness of such programs. Some cities and counties have established magnet schools for the gifted which are patterned after the hugely successful specialized high schools in New York City. But unlike the programs in New York, all too many are not really gifted programs. Instead, they are a solution to an earlier integration problem.

Consequently we have regrettably entered an era where funds for gifted programs are being eliminated from educational budgets for financial or "politically correct" reasons. Partially because of the inclusion movement that has given a bad name to the labeling of students, gifted students are no longer identified in many school districts. Lack of labeling would not be disastrous if appropriate resources were provided for enrichment, but the growth of enrollment in most school districts has brought fewer actual expenditures for each student.

Teachers are expected to identify the needs of all students assigned to the same classroom, and then to plan differentiated instruction to meet the specified needs. Coupled with the rise in class size and the increased expectations for parental involvement, the task of teaching has become awesome. Even the most energetic and knowledgeable teacher has limits, and will probably not be able to effectively reach or challenge all students in the traditional classroom setting.

Administrators have been eliminated in many school districts and the few that are left frequently do not have the time to read, plan and develop programs that will meet the needs of gifted students. To illustrate the seriousness of this problem consider Broward County, Florida. In January 1994, a new Superintendent of Schools was hired and charged by the School Board to do three things: reduce crime in the schools, deal with the increasing enrollment problems and reduce drug usage in the schools. Those three missions are only

obliquely related to educating children.

Moreover, many school districts are not current in this era of technology. Often the funds are not available for technological initiatives and administrators are so absorbed with other priorities that seeking funds, or studying the available technology is beyond them.

The current conditions in education are not happy news for teachers who wish to do a good job, or for the parents of gifted children who must now make choices. They can choose to put their children in private schools that challenge gifted students. However, these schools are difficult to find and are usually very costly. Furthermore, some private schools advertise and don't deliver. Time is wasted as the parent analyzes the effectiveness of the school. Parents can try to change the school system. Given the very confused status of public policy regarding education, this is an almost impossible task. If the parent were successful, time has elapsed and by the time change might be recognizable, the child may be too old to benefit from the change. Thus, the most effective and immediately useful strategy for parents of gifted children is to exercise creativity and use their private financial resources to purchase today's technology, thus ensuring that their child has the opportunity to maximize innate potential.

HOW CAN PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR THE GIFTED STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL?

The picture is not totally bleak. Much of the educational reform of the late 1980's and the early 1990's focused on the reorganization or re-engineering of schools to use the power of cooperative efforts by teachers and parents. School councils have been established in many schools and joint planning for the improvement of the school is the agenda. Known as site-based management, the concept of joint management of the schools has been successful when the focus of improvement is maintained by all.

Applying this notion to gifted students is a natural next step. Working together, parents and teachers can provide opportunities that inspire and stimulate children's thinking in ways that augment, but do not compete with the instruction given in the classroom. Leadership for a cooperative program to stimulate gifted children is most likely to come from parents who recognize that the teachers and administrators are overburdened and do not have the time to establish such a program.

Meeting with the school principal is the best first step to establish a working group of parents and teachers to

explore and develop an organized program. The Parent Teacher Organization of the school may also be helpful. Traditionally volunteer cadres of parents have raised funds to obtain equipment for the schools or to provide enrichment assemblies and field trips, but they have also demonstrated an interest in helping to establish, fund and maintain academic programs for the students in the school. Frequently the functioning school councils in reorganized schools are very interested in furthering the use of technology, therefore, they may be very interested in new ideas from parents. The same ideas can be used with all students. Thus, the often unspoken belief that the gifted students will be given special opportunities that should be available to everyone is addressed and eliminated as an obstacle.

WITH OR WITHOUT THE COOPERATION OF THE SCHOOL, PARENTS CAN HELP CHALLENGE GIFTED STUDENTS BY:

Purchasing a Computer, Printer and Appropriate Software for Use in the Home. Today's computers are compact, efficient and relatively inexpensive to purchase. For approximately \$2,000 you can purchase a computer, monitor, modem and CD-Rom with sufficient memory and disc space to run and use many programs. A laser printer will be very helpful and for \$900 you can purchase a very good one. You will find many uses for this computer and printer, and you will be very glad that you made the investment.

Purchasing and using many currently available software programs will allow you to help your gifted child learn and grow. Best of all, your child will be an active learner. In the past, computer assisted learning has failed because the learner was passive. Today's software programs are interactive and the learner is no longer a passive participant. You can make the learning more active by discussing the use of the programs and what has been learned with your child.

Helping them to Access and Acquire Information. Gifted children master the basic skills quickly. Progressing beyond the basic skills requires knowledge. Traditionally school libraries have not been adequately funded to meet the information needs of gifted students. Often these libraries close when school is over and for fiscal reasons, many local public libraries are closed on weekends. However, today's technology makes it very easy to find data.

Young children are fascinated with multimedia CD-Rom programs. Kid's Zoo--A Baby Animal Adventure (\$59.95 retail) and Microsoft Dinosaurs (\$79.95 retail) can be used to introduce preschool age youngsters to the

wonders of information available. Older children will enjoy CD-Rom based encyclopedias such as Microsoft Encarta (\$399.95 retail, based on Funk & Wagnall's Corporation encyclopedia). As the child's need for information increases, networks such as Prodigy, CompuServe or Internet allow anyone to retrieve information quickly and easily.

Internet, sometimes called the "network of networks" allows access to the greatest amount of information. You could encourage your school district to obtain an Internet account, or you could establish your own account. Small firms are sprouting to allow individual users easy access to the Internet. These firms are often associated with bookstores. For \$20.00 per month you can obtain an account number and use the network for 30 hours in that month. Joining Internet through private firms allows you to use ARCHIE, VERONICA, WAIS, WWW, TELNET, FTP, and GOPHER among other network servers to access vast collections of information.

Initially, an individual may find that using the network is very complex. Some books that explain Internet are almost impossible to understand. Find one that you can read. There is a learning curve and with effort and concentration, access to the network becomes possible. Using the network frequently makes use easier.

It should be noted that using Internet is not inexpensive. Besides the monthly account number charge there are additional charges to subscribe to some services on the Internet and telephone charges for the modem required to use the system. However, the expenditure is justified by the amount of information that is available. Imagine being able to have ready access to the Library of Congress any time of the day or night!

With or without the cooperation of the school, the gifted child will benefit from using Internet. The child will find information very easily for almost any assignment. Using E-mail or direct connections, the students can communicate with others who are interested in the same subjects. If the school supports the child with recognition or the opportunity to share knowledge from the Internet, so much the better.

Stimulating Divergent Thinking. The literature on giftedness emphasizes that the gifted child usually thinks divergently. Yet, the curriculum in public schools seldom includes rewards for students who engage in divergent thinking. In fact, most of the instruction and testing reward the regurgitation of small bits of information. Typically students are not asked to analyze or synthesize information, much less to think divergently.

Divergent thinking needs to be rewarded, or the behavior will become rusty with disuse. One way to encourage a child to continue thinking differently is to introduce the child to a software program called IdeaFisher. For less than \$100.00, you get a program that promotes expansive thinking.

The manual for the program contains examples of how to use the program in the adult world, but a child can use the program to generate ideas for writing assignments and for problem solving activities. The program contains 65,000 words and phrases in the IdeaBank, and 775,000 associated links. The Qbank has 6,000 questions that can be used to develop ideas. As you use the program, you can record your work on the Idea Notepad and the Answer Notepad. Creating a macro allows access to IdeaFisher from three word processing programs—WordPerfect 5.2 & 6.0, Microsoft Word 2.0 and 6.0 and Ami Pro 3.0.

The program is very simple to use, and the major value of the program is the pattern of thinking that can be learned. The child has to think to create ideas, to choose between ideas and to accumulate the associations that go with the ideas. Answering the questions provided helps stimulate the analytic thinking process and generates further questions leading to creative solutions. In essence, this program is a variation on the Socratic questioning method. The only thing missing is human analysis of the answers given by the user. Additional modules can be added to the system. These add-ons are available for strategic planning, speeches and presentations, and business and grant proposals.

IdeaFisher can be used by gifted children to do assignments given by the teacher. For example, if the child is asked to write a new ending for a book that the class has read or if the assignment is to find a solution to a pollution problem, the students can use the program to generate ideas. If the project is to do a research paper on a particular topic, the program would be helpful to select the topic and to identify all aspects of the subject to be researched. If there is a poster contest, this is a great way to generate new slogans. In a cooperative learning activity the group of students could use the program to generate ideas to complete the project assigned.

If the school doesn't own the program or can't buy the program, parents certainly can purchase it and help their children to use it to complete assignments. Parents might volunteer to form seminar groups with several gifted students from the same grade or school and teach all of the students to use the program and to discuss their results with respect to a particular assignment.

Involving the teacher in this effort is imperative so that the children receive the recognition that will be needed to continue.

Increasing the production of creative products. Gifted students produce creative products. Before computers those creative products were limited. For example, creative writing was tedious because so many handwritten or separately typed drafts were required. Scientific calculations filled notebooks. Now, parents can help increase the gifted child's output by purchasing or providing access to the tools that make production easy. Writing, calculating, producing graphics, and creating data bases are all simple using integrated software programs such as Microsoft Works. Writing can be easily revised by moving or reconfiguring text and the use of programs that check spelling help to produce a perfect finished product. Grammar program checkers help the student learn the rules for writing by correcting poor usage. Use of a software program thesaurus allows the child to vary language in a document and to develop an extended vocabulary. Calculations are easy using spreadsheet programs and data base programs allow vast amounts of data to be simply tracked. As the child's sophistication grows, the parent can consider purchasing more sophisticated programs for word processing, data bases, graphics and spreadsheets.

Many programs are available to track personal finances or small business finance. Students can use these programs to first follow their allowance expenditures and later to trace their clothing, book and entertainment expenses. Training in this area of finances is essential to avoid the pitfalls that many adult children have faced before their return to the parents' empty nest.

Simple Computer Assisted Drawing programs are available and can be used by the student to do simple design projects. As the child's interest or skills develop, more complex programs can be purchased and drafting and architectural exercises can be completed.

Effective project management and scheduling evolve from mastering daily scheduling. Many programs are available for daily scheduling. One of the easiest to use is SIDEKICK (\$39.95) which provides daily calendar reminders when you turn on your computer. Again, as the sophistication of the child grows, other programs can be purchased.

Software programs are available to help students learn foreign languages. Most will provide translations from English to the language being studied and conversely, from the new language to English. What a wonderful way to see if the foreign language essay or translation is

correctly done!

Desktop publishing is easy to do with very simple to use programs. MICROSOFT Publisher (\$139.99 retail) is one inexpensive, but effective example. If the child uses the templates provided, production of quality products is guaranteed.

Learning geography can often be a deadly dull activity when the student is asked to memorize the cities, capitals and countries. Automap Road Atlas (\$49.95 retail) and the add-on Automap Destination Europe (\$49.95 retail) allows the student to map destinations and to learn geography in an interactive and connected manner.

The examples of available computer software listed above are not exhaustive. Many more programs exist and are useful tools in every field that a student may wish to study. Most important, use of the programs does help the student to learn more quickly and to increase the production of creative products.

Schools frequently have computers. If the home computer and the school computer operating systems are compatible, then the child can easily expand a product at home by bringing the disc home. Conversely, if the child begins a project at home, the project can be continued in school. If the equipment is not compatible, there are programs that will read and convert incompatible discs. Conversion from one operating system to another is still difficult, but is getting easier.

Using a Mentor. Developing as a learner requires discussion of information and ideas with experts in the field. The best example is in the field of science. Many scientists are flattered to be contacted by a student who wishes a reaction to an idea. Many are glad to supervise a research project and the companies that employ these scientists will often allow students to work on site or to communicate through modems. Faculty members at college and universities will also work with off-site students.

A parent can help by making the connection between the scientist and the student and obtaining the blessing of a teacher and the school for the project. Often the school will fund the expense of the modem transmissions and will help to make the necessary research equipment and facilities available to the students.

Using the Power of Fiber Optic Video Networks. In the same way that news programs now connect remote sites and interact with far away newsmakers, many colleges and universities and some high schools have fiber optic video classrooms that allow one teacher at a

host site to reach and interact with four remote classrooms. Students may take courses or attend lectures through these interactive fiber optic networks. The teacher in the host classroom can hear the students' comments in each of the remote sites and answer questions long distance. Students can discuss the homework with the teacher and the teacher can see the homework assignments, or the students can fax the work to the teacher.

If you live near a college or university you might inquire about the feasibility of allowing students in the public school access to the courses offered to the college students. Frequently, high schools will participate in such a program by obtaining county or state funding for the necessary setup of a classroom. Eventually, as fiber optic wiring becomes more common and more of the sites are switched from analog wiring to digital wiring, more of these opportunities will be available to interested students. Digital wiring enables more than four remote sites to be linked. It is not inconceivable that in the very near future High School students will be taking college courses on Saturdays, after school or in the evenings.

CONCLUSION

Innate intelligence is a hallmark of gifted children. That intelligence needs to be stimulated so that it is effectively used. Parents can make a difference and can help to stimulate and further the growth and development of their gifted child using today's technology. The technological advances described in this article are merely examples of the tools available now. Every day, more advances are made and parents will benefit from adding the new items to their collection. If the parents wish to share their success stories with other parents, school councils can be formed or expanded to spread the programs and to learn from other parents.

ENDNOTE

Further information about Computer Software can be found in:

Cheryl Currid & Company. SOFTWARE: WHAT'S HOT! WHAT'S NOT! Pima Publishing P. O. Box 1260BK. Rocklin, California 95677.



OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS FOR REAL GIFTED PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT!

**BY BRUCE GURCSIK SUPERVISOR OF GIFTED PROGRAMS
ARIN INTERMEDIATE UNIT 28 SHELOCTA, PA**

In spite of the extensive research and program development, educators continue to struggle to meet the challenges of teaching the gifted child. The most common strategies involve some form of enrichment at the elementary school level and acceleration or tracking at the secondary level. Generally, pupils are pulled together under the direction of a specialist into homogeneous groups for specialized instruction. While we have relied upon and continue to cling to these strategies, clearly the solution to the puzzle of challenging the gifted learner continues to elude us. National reports indicating that high school students from other countries achieve better in mathematic and science than the top 5% of our population or our gifted learners, clearly indicate that the failure of public school education extends to the gifted. Furthermore, financially distressed school districts are reducing their gifted program options in order to balance budgets (New York Times, 1992). Dismal could be the most accurate term to describe the condition of programs for the gifted.

Outcomes-based education (OBE) is now sweeping over the American educational landscape. This new approach focuses upon deliberate attempts to plan and conduct essential activities in order to accomplish preconceived aims (Spady, 1988). Basic education is being recreated at a fundamental level in an attempt to prepare our youth for the future. This renewal is based on concepts and strategies which have been commonplace in programs for the gifted (Gurcsik, 1992). The most popular include a focus on higher-order thinking skills, development of leadership ability, creation of non-graded primary levels, elimination of Carnegie Units, extension of the school day, blurring and blending of content areas, creation of parent- school governing councils, greater use of technology and others. A quick review of the components of the "break-the-mold schools" (Phi Delta Kappan, 1992), our most celebrated, leading-edge learning centers, will reveal a tepid brew of reform-minded ingredients that will turn our pupils into thinkers and problem-solvers. While we won't find

reform guru Ted Sizer blushing, as first steps these attempts are notable.

What does all of this "revolutionary" thinking mean for the gifted learner? Is there a silver lining that upon discovery will enable educators to deliver the Grail once and for all? Perhaps, all of this is another fad that too will pass, thus validating increased demand for more enrichment or acceleration for the gifted.

I would encourage my colleagues to embrace the changes as positive steps that can only enhance opportunities for gifted learners. This fresh wind influencing educators around the country provides a genuine, golden opportunity for gifted educators and parents to improve the learning environment for the gifted through systematic change, not the band-aid approaches of the past. How many of us have accepted half-hearted enrichment programs that show little or no statistical benefit for the gifted learner? How often have we stated that the gifted child is exceptional all of the time not just during the special class? Total gifted program improvement can happen only if we go beyond our current self-serving focus and team up with the change masters in the regular educational community. My beliefs are based upon the assumption that for the gifted the benefits of outcomes-based programs are real. Since educators and parents of the gifted are knowledgeable and proactive, partnership in the change process can greatly increase the potential for the infusion of high expectations and quality to regular education that often form the foundation of gifted programs. This quality emphasis is essential if the gifted are to be challenged in the new educational scheme.

Specifically, I see several areas where the thinking that surrounds OBE-based programs possesses the potential to serve the gifted well:

1. **Strategic planning, the process whereby a district will develop a long term focus for its resources, provides an outstanding opportunity for input by those who are sensitive to the needs of the gifted.** This process always involves input from a broad-based group of educators and citizens. Participation in this phase of school-based planning is essential! As a member of the strategic planning team, an opportunity to influence the incorporation of excellence and quality into the curriculum will be provided. Therefore, advocates for the gifted must work hard to be included as the foundation for a superior educational system being created in the local district.

2. **Often OBE includes or is based upon a vision of what education will or should be in a district.** That

vision must include a firm belief in the need to develop educational opportunities for all students regardless of their strengths or weaknesses. Dr. Spady has identified for educators the need for districts to move up the "OBE mountain" from traditional models to those that focus on transitional and transformational outcomes. The potential for increased challenge for the gifted learner is great. By insisting upon such a focus, the conditions for a dynamic curriculum that will benefit the gifted can be created.

3. **The outcomes that are developed will include those established by your state school authority, as well as those developed locally.** The outcomes must include clear references that have direct relationship to components for the gifted. At the base of program improvement is the focus on higher order competencies. However, where the gifted classroom may set this as a target, developing OBE schools will be targeting the complex role performances and life-role functioning that Spady sees as more powerful than school or curriculum-based activities that currently serve as limits to the learner. In this way the provisions for excellent curriculum that will benefit the gifted will be imbedded in the most fundamental levels of program decision-making.

4. **Many OBE programs will endorse Bloom's "teach-test-reteach-retest" cycle and encourage enrichment.** This approach developed by Benjamin Bloom will provide data to support acceleration and/or enrichment for the gifted (Bloom, 1968). As a parent and/or teacher, you will have specific information to support requests for relief from study on concepts or topics that have already been mastered! OBE-based programs specifically reference "extensions" for those with mastery (Abrams, 1985).

5. **Implementation of OBE Programs will require faculty to receive in-service training.** Any opportunity for staff training must be welcomed. Regardless of its focus the potential for improvements in teaching is always inherent in training. In-service programs for teachers in problem-solving, higher order thinking skills community service projects and others will result in teachers who are better equipped to teach the gifted learner.

6. **Portfolio assessment is a common evaluation approach in OBE programs.** The gifted learner is ideally suited for this type of multiple assessment. No longer will student achievement be drawn exclusively from "tests" but will include displays, reports, demonstrations, models, group activity, videos and other empowering forms of evaluation. This type of assessment has been

encouraged for years by pundits in the field of gifted child education.

7. OBE objectives commonly reference "critical thinking" as an essential component. Whether it is termed critical thinking, higher order thinking or problem-solving, this focus for curriculum is consistent with the needs of the gifted. Since most programs for the gifted include this emphasis, its inclusion in basic education offers the potential for a quantum leap in the level of challenge in the regular classroom.

8. Empowerment of teachers through the development of leadership teams (a component of total quality management which often accompanies OBE) provides opportunities to influence decision-making at the classroom level. Any opportunity to improve the delivery of instruction in the classroom (where the rubber meets the road) increases the opportunity for meaningful change for the gifted. The sanction by top level management for decentralized decision-making (which is inherent in OBE) will permit the teacher to introduce a variety of learning strategies that can be of great benefit to the gifted learner. This opportunity has the potential to improve instruction through the belief that people (teachers) will support and take pride in what they help to create.

9. OBE-oriented programs place an emphasis on self-directed learning with increased opportunities for independent and guided study for the gifted. Just about every gifted program component includes and encourages the gifted learner to pursue through comprehensive study an area of interest. A basic education class that has at its core, the opportunity for a pupil to independently study would go a long way toward opening up advanced study opportunities for the gifted.

10. Self-evaluation, as an integral part of the assessment system, results in specific benefits for the gifted. Dr. William Glasser believes that self-evaluation is one of the most powerful change elements available to our schools today (Glasser, 1990). All of us use self-evaluation daily in our work and advanced level studies. That ability, when developed to a high level, provides the learner with a means of self-challenge that can be of immense value. When used as part of the OBE-based

system in the regular classroom, the potential for individual growth may be unlimited.

I have attempted to highlight the components that are common to OBE-type programs and view them in a way that could result in the positive development of regular education curriculum that could benefit the gifted. Naturally, the application of these strategies in the classroom will be the real test. However, I suggest that those who are interested in improving programs for the gifted become actively involved in the new education environment. Change is happening and those who support the gifted need to be in the mainstream not on the periphery. With enthusiastic and tireless involvement the results can only be of benefit to the gifted learner.

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TOWARDS EXCELLENCE AND JUSTICE FOR ALL: A RESPONSE TO SCHROEDER-DAVIS
BY MARA SAPON-SHEVIN PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

I am pleased to be asked to respond to Schroeder-Davis' critique of my book, Playing Favorites: Gifted Education and the Disruption of Community (1994). The angry, powerful response my work engendered is a good indication of the magnitude and the seriousness of both the issue and my analysis. I am especially flattered to have Schroeder-Davis characterize my book as having "something objectionable on nearly every page," as I would guess this means I have written an unusually coherent text!

Reading Schroeder-Davis' analysis and criticism made it painfully clear to me that the field of gifted education (and his perspective) is so insular that many of the concerns I raised made little sense to him. I will begin by discussing the ways in which I feel Schroeder-Davis did not understand either the book or its analysis, including a discussion of what this lack of shared perspective means for students and education. I will conclude by analyzing the ways in which I feel Schroeder-Davis did indeed understand my perspective and what his reaction (and strong feeling) tells us about the field and the future.

If there's no silence, why is this analysis so "troubling" and "bizarre"? Schroeder-Davis is distressed by my "persona" as "pioneer" "breaking the silence." He feels that issues of equity and excellence have been discussed exhaustively in the literature. If, in fact, my assertions have been "made previously and debated thoroughly," why then, is my book so challenging to the field, challenging enough for him to characterize me as "the vanguard of a new wave of critics"? While I am certainly not the first person to raise the issues of elitism, racism, meritocracy and inequitable education with relation to gifted education, these issues have hardly been resolved. The field of gifted education would not be under the gun at the moment if these issues had been taken care of satisfactorily already. And, I would argue again, that the kinds of questions I am asking are different questions — not just questions about "How do we make gifted programs more ethnically and racially diverse?" or "How do we include multiple intelligences within the purview of gifted education?" but "What happens when we identify children as gifted and what happens to their education and the education of the children who remain unlabeled?" These are very different questions, and they are not likely to be resolvable within the field or discourse of gifted education because their resolution would require a complete reorganization of our thinking and educational programming, including abandoning segregated programs for students labeled "gifted."

Giftedness and Social Construction: Labels Come From People. Schroeder-Davis flatly rejects my analysis of giftedness as a social construction and insists that there are children who are members of a discrete population ("gifted children") and that they "exist." He is critical of my

statement that "without school rules and politics, legal and educational practices designed to provide services to gifted students, this category, per se, would not exist." Perhaps Schroeder-Davis should read more closely. I never said that children who perform stunningly well, or who differ substantially from their peers in certain ways, would not exist, but that the category would not exist. Category creation is a human activity, and, as such, it is framed by our values, our perceptions and our motivations. We are the ones that take certain characteristics of human beings and make them salient. Other cultures may choose differently. If our curriculum was based largely on spear throwing and hunting, then categories of height, quality of eye sight and upper body strength might be the defining ones used to describe people. We, as a culture, have chosen verbal intelligence as measured primarily by performance on IQ tests, as our characteristic of choice. He is correct that researchers and practitioners did not create children who learn faster than their age-peers, but they did create a category and call it "giftedness." I would encourage Schroeder-Davis to read more widely in order to understand the problematic and political nature of category creation, starting, perhaps with Gould's The Mismeasure of Man; the work of Mercer on mental retardation labeling; the fine work of Cicourel and Kitsuse or Mehan on educational decision making; and anything on the sociology of knowledge construction. Any of these might help Schroeder-Davis and other readers understand the ways in which categories emerge and the effects of those categories on subsequent policy and decision making.

The use of the term "coercive egalitarianism" (not surprisingly, the title of Schroeder-Davis' book) is clearly meant to enrage. How dare I suggest that we don't want people to "be all that they can be" or what I would suggest that, in the name of fairness, people with exceptional skills should be limited or held back? In fact, I said none of these things. I want all children to receive rich, exciting, nurturing educations that meet their unique educational needs. These educational programs will likely differ in hundreds of ways (if they are indeed responsive to individual children) because children differ in hundreds of ways. I have never set a goal of "equality of outcome" nor do I think such a thing is possible. What I do believe is that all children deserve to have resources committed to their educations, need high expectations, merit consistently caring and thoughtful educators in their lives, and should be part of loving, supportive communities. And, I have observed that the existence of gifted programming for only some children, gets in the way of these objectives for all.

Sorry John Dewey, *Community is not a Value Anymore*. I must say that I chuckled to learn that the goal of creating schools as communities of learners was a "peculiar" one and one that Schroeder-Davis, in his 22 years in education, after

conversing with over 5,000 people had never heard of! As a Professor of Education, I would certainly love to see the course syllabi of the education courses that Schroeder-Davis took as part of his doctoral work. I guess John Dewey, the foremost writer about education and democracy, was not on the reading list. And I would love to know, of course, which 5,000 people he had talked to (in addition to counting them, in and of itself an impressive feat!). Many of the thousands of educators that I address yearly on topics of cooperative learning, diversity education and developing fully inclusive schools believe that establishing a strong school community is an essential goal, and a necessary antecedent to other forms of pedagogical and curricular reform.

Either Schroeder-Davis intentionally misreads my vision of inclusive classroom communities, or, perhaps even more sadly, he has never experienced the kind of classroom I describe. Nowhere did I suggest (as he said) "sacrificing the needs of those with high ability" or that such a classroom would exclude the kinds of services provided to "gifted" students. There are millions of brilliant, creative, innovative and flexible ways to provide exciting educational opportunities for students. I am always heartened to visit schools and classroom in which children of many levels and interests are all productively engaged in learning tasks appropriate to their needs. I am not convinced, however, that these opportunities can only be provided in segregated, pull-out, exclusive (members only) settings.

Although Schroeder-Davis states, "Clearly, what is being exposed within this false either/or proposition is equity over excellence," I never made such a statement. I agree with Schroeder-Davis that equity and excellence are not an "either/or proposition." I do not feel that being explicit about how resources are allocated and exploring thoughtfully the ramifications and consequences of certain forms of inequitable resource distribution leads to a privileging of equity over excellence. Rather it might lead to lots more excellence for more people!

Envisioning and Supporting a Diverse Society. There are many more areas in which it is clear that Schroeder-Davis and I do not hold similar beliefs or understandings about the goals of the American educational system. His statement, for example, that "a meritocratic system is the most efficient and ethical method of selection possible" is so far from my own belief in and commitment to excellence for all children, that it is difficult to find even enough common ground for a rebuttal.

I will also not respond to Schroeder-Davis' patently false statement that "hereditary privilege" is not a problem in America, or that sheer will (persistence and effort) are sufficient to make schools a level playing field. It is this kind of argument that embeds the racism and stratification even further within our schools — if you only worked hard enough and cared more, you could make it! I would dare

Schroeder-Davis to make these statements in front of a racially diverse community in which the gifted program is almost completely white. Interestingly enough, Schroeder-Davis never responds to the discussion of racism or my discussion of the ways in which gifted programs collude with existing patterns of racial discrimination in schools and society. I would urge him to examine the racial and ethnic compositions of schools nationally and then to respond.

And, sadly, Schroeder-Davis completely misinterprets the data I report from my study. He concludes that because many of the informants do not share what he calls my "moral indignation," it is clear that there is no problem and that the situation is "tension free." The logic of this statement is a lot like declaring, "I interviewed 100 people about the destruction of the ozone layer and only two of them were at all concerned, so it is clear that the problem has been blown way out of proportion." In fact, the reactions of the participants in my study are completely consistent with my analysis of the ways in which gifted education is firmly embedded, relatively immune from serious examination or critique, and closely connected to the disempowerment and deskilling of teachers. The fact that many teachers, parents and students were complacent about the issue, or had, in fact, given up arguing, says a lot about silencing and little about the seriousness of the problem.

Schroeder-Davis urges me to talk more to students about issues such as inclusion and ability grouping. I think this is a fine recommendation for us both. I think that students are incredibly perceptive about their own lives and schooling and that much weight should be given to their feelings and understandings. And, we must also place their remarks within a context — if students have experienced poorly implemented heterogeneous classrooms in which their own education has been damaged by the presence of disruptive students, and the curriculum has been boring and inflexibly unmotivating, this is indeed problematic. It says much about the need to support teachers far more extensively as they move away from tracking and towards heterogeneous teaching. And it speaks volumes about the ways in which teachers are prepared in colleges and universities and about their need for extensive preparation for heterogeneous teaching and community building. It says little, however, about how we should organize our schools so that students get to know and value a wide range of fellow students.

On Not Valuing People with Disabilities: The Dangers of Gifted Elitism Personified. But beyond all the places that I feel that Schroeder-Davis did not understand my book or the places that it is clear that we do not agree, the aspect of Schroeder-Davis' review that most distressed me was his discussion of students with disabilities. While it is clear that Schroeder-Davis is a product of his own quite limited educational history with people with disabilities, the attitudes and values he expresses concerning children he calls "unmotivated," "defiant," "resolutely subversive" —

children he refers to as "predators" — upset me deeply. As an educator who works daily with students who are identified as having a variety of educational and behavioral disabilities, and with teachers who are preparing to teach (and currently teaching) in heterogeneous, inclusive classrooms, Schroeder-Davis' attitudes are an unfortunate indication of the prejudices and misinformation which impede these students' active participation and success in classrooms. And, not surprisingly, Schroeder-Davis' negative attitudes towards diversity are not limited to his prejudices about children with disabilities. He also asks, "Why every imaginable incapacity and deficiency — many of them freely chosen and highly resistant to our corrective efforts — is tolerated and embraced, while the fact of high ability is not only not revered, it is denied, ridiculed and abandoned?"

The fact that Schroeder-Davis equates diversity with "incapacity" and "deficiency" and sees differences as things that need to be "corrected" is very troublesome. I certainly do not feel that those with high ability should be denied, ridiculed or abandoned — I do not feel that any human being should be treated that way — but I would extend to all children the same treatment that Schroeder-Davis would like offered to the children identified as "gifted."

Schroeder-Davis' comments also make me sincerely wonder what contact he has had with children with disabilities and their parents, and about his beliefs about the value and educability of all children. Were I a parent of a child with a disability, I would have serious qualms about Schroeder-Davis' commitment to my child and his/her education, and, further, to Schroeder-Davis' willingness to think about the broader community into which my child will move and become a part. Perhaps, the existence of a highly trained professional with extensive graduate education training who talks about children with disabilities with such scorn and fear is the best indication of the critical need for all students to meet, know, appreciate and connect with students with disabilities. We cannot afford any more adults who hold the attitudes such as those expressed by Schroeder-Davis as we move towards a multi-cultural, diverse community.

To begin with, Schroeder-Davis' understanding of the current Full Inclusion movement is quite limited. The term "least restrictive environment" which he uses and then applies to "gifted" students in order to describe the regular classroom as "severely restrictive environments" for gifted students has been largely replaced with an analysis of the changes that need to be made in "typical" classrooms which make them good learning environments for all students. These changes, which include changes in pedagogy, curriculum and staffing, are all designed to meet the needs of a wide range of learners within a unified community. While I will concede that such classrooms are far from common place, there are a growing number of places in which such classrooms are operationalized. Rather than restrictive environments for any student, they tend to be

exciting, student-centered classrooms which make use of learning centers, critical thinking skills, cooperative learning, multi-level teaching, multiple intelligences, multi-modality teaching and so on. Schroeder-Davis' comments about the inappropriateness of cooperative learning for gifted students, for example, is further indication of his inability to separate bad pedagogy and poor implementation from a goal of inclusion and a commitment to diverse learners.

Also misleading, perhaps intentionally, is Schroeder-Davis' references to students who are "emotionally disturbed and potentially violent as well as those who are simply hostile to education" as representing the crux of the inclusion movement. This is a scare tactic, plain and simple. It is designed to convince parents of "gifted" students that axe-murders and knife-wielding crazy children will soon take over their child's classroom in the name of inclusion, and that separate programs for gifted students are the only solution. This is another example of partial data followed by an erroneous and not necessarily logical or inevitable conclusion.

The AFT's concern that some school districts have "rushed into inclusion without a firm foundation and are now experiencing problems" is a concern I share deeply. Inclusion, thoughtfully implemented, requires planning and preparation time, support for teachers and administrators, changes in curriculum and pedagogy, re-organized staff arrangements and a firm commitment to the principles of diversity and community. Not all schools have moved towards such conscientious implementation. But the conclusion Schroeder-Davis makes (and others as well) is that inclusion shouldn't be done. My conclusion is that knowing all we know about the nature of school change and the need for comprehensive systems' change rather than superficial tinkering, we better do inclusion well. And, doing inclusion well should include serious attention to meeting the needs of students now served in gifted programs within the inclusion model, not simply the abandonment of the services they now receive.

Lastly, I would like to thank Schroeder-Davis for labeling me a "reformist." It is a label I will accept with pride. I will also accept "idealist" (one who believes that things and people can do better) and "visionary" (one who works towards a vision or goal). I remain committed to re-inventing schools in which all students are accepted, nurtured and valued for their unique gifts. Certainly this includes students currently labeled as "gifted" — I want these students to be secure in their talents, warmly welcomed by their classmates, encouraged to do their best, challenged by high demands and high expectations, and seen as complete people, rather than scores on a test or subtest. An important difference, though, between Schroeder-Davis and me, is that this is what I want for all students. ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

TRIBUTE TO A GREAT AMERICAN HUMORIST, JAMES THURBER (1894-1961)

BY MICHAEL E. WALTERS NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Humor is emotional chaos remembered in tranquility." James Thurber

The United States has produced a wonderful array of literary giants who have expressed themselves through humor. It is important to include the study of these individuals in the gifted curriculum because they will appeal to the sensibility of gifted children. One of these giants was honored in September 1994 by the United States Postal Service with a commemorative stamp issued in memory of James Thurber. This stamp contained Thurber's own self-portrait.

He is part of the American tradition of great literary humorists represented by such writers as Mark Twain, Ambrose Bierce, Ring Lardner, H.L. Mencken and Garrison Keillor. All of them had two remarkable traits easily taken for granted: the ability to write creatively on a highly artistic level, and the expression of profound social criticism and philosophical insights.

Gifted children should learn that other societies in world history have not valued humor as much as ours. For example, the two ogres of 20th century totalitarianism, Hitler and Stalin, tried to outlaw humor. Adolf Hitler was fearful of Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse and felt that the rodent was an insult to the Aryan Superman concept. The Russian writer, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, was sent to the gulag for a comic reference he made in a personal letter about Joseph Stalin's mustache.

In contrast to the totalitarian dislike of humor, there is a strong positive link between humor and the democratic sensibility. Our country has long been fertile and friendly soil for humorists. The national legacy includes such gems of humor as the frontier tall tale (e.g., the story of Paul Bunyan), the Afro-American folk tale represented in modern times by Langston Hughes' simple stories, the social satire written by women humorists such as Dorothy Parker, and the ironical theater of our contemporary playwright, Neil Simon. There is also an acting tradition of American humor starting with Mark Twain's stage performances, proceeding through Will Rogers' vaudeville and stage career, and culminating in Bill Cosby's recent family humor on television.

Besides Thurber's literary achievements, there are several other reasons for studying and honoring him. He was an excellent caricaturist whose drawings were the inspiration for social commentary cartoons in *The New Yorker* and other periodicals. His depictions of dogs are considered to be classical cartoons. This genre is another example of how easy it is to take cultural achievements for granted. The American cartoon tradition as represented by *Tom and Jerry*, *Woody Woodpecker*, *Donald Duck* and the *Flintstones* is appreciated worldwide as an art form.

In 1927 Thurber became a staff writer for *The New Yorker* and remained one for over thirty years. In addition to writing his own books, essays and stories, he helped to develop fellow writers such as E.B. White, Dorothy Parker, Edmund Wilson, and Peter De Vries. In the 1920s and 1930s, writers and cultural figures (among them were Thurber, Ring Lardner, Oscar Levant, the Marx Brothers, Dorothy Parker, Edmund Wilson, George S. Kaufman, Tallulah Bankhead, Noel Coward, Edna Ferber, etc.) gathered for lunch at the Algonquin Hotel near *The New Yorker's* offices. This was probably the most famous luncheon group in American history! The "Algonquin Round Table" included people from all areas of the media and entertainment business – journalism, theater, radio and movies. These discussions helped to stimulate a cultural renaissance in the literary arts that influenced Thurber and his colleagues to develop *The New Yorker* into a great magazine of literature and intellectual discourse.

In the area of drama, Thurber wrote one of the most significant plays ever produced on the American stage, *The Male Animal* (1940). It is even more relevant today than when it was first performed, since it is a humorous but penetrating critique of the American idea of maleness and the sports cult. During World War II, he also composed fairy tales that analyzed the totalitarian personality, e.g., *The Great Quillow* (1944).

This great American writer and literary catalyst was troubled throughout his life by visual handicaps that led to blindness in his last decades. Yet he did not allow this physical problem to hinder or limit his artistic productivity. The world renowned poet T.S. Eliot was one of James Thurber's admirers. In his 1951 tribute to Thurber, we get a sense of this humorist's greatness: "It is a form of humor which is also a way of saying something serious. There is criticism of life at the bottom of it. It is serious and even somber. Unlike so much of humor, it is not merely a criticism of manners – that is, of the superficial aspects of society at a given moment – but something more profound. His writings and also his illustrations are capable of surviving the immediate environment and time out of which they spring. To some extent, they will be a document of the age they belong to."

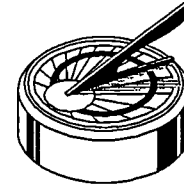
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As members of a field of American education concerned with developing the gifts of its highest ability children, we need more imaginative solutions to our problems than currently demonstrated in the formal literature and in discussions of these problems. Among the critical areas that need such solutions are: identifying ethnic minorities for gifted programs, and designing a core curriculum that will help all gifted children to grow intellectually in the 21st century. This curriculum should help them to understand and respect knowledge accumulated by World civilizations during the last 3,000 years.

Diane Grybek is concerned with identifying high ability minority youth involved in inner city gangs. What is most enlightening about her article is the process by which she attempts to understand hard-core gang connected youth from black and Hispanic cultures. It is an excellent illustration of the end product (a checklist used for identification purposes) being less important than the process of learning about these children's behavior and values.

What impressed us most about Grybek's analysis of this problem is that she uses ideas from sociology, cultural anthropology and mythology, information about these students' families, and information concerning gang members' rules of proper behavior. She also compares these findings with observations of the social values of white middle class families to produce insights concerning the culture in which many minority students live. Grybek's perspective shows educators what they should be asking about students usually overlooked for participation in differential education programs. These youth may be involved in the crack cocaine culture of ghetto life, or they may engage in other criminal activities that remove them from mainstream middle class America.

Grybek discusses why the school staff usually ignores this group, resulting in the exclusion of an important segment of children from gifted education. She argues that once these children are studied, they can be salvaged – many are highly intelligent and brilliant. (Her assessment instrument can help in the identification process.) This approach to studying inner-city gang-based minority children is unique in the gifted education field, and represents imaginative thinking about giftedness. The gifted field needs more writing at this high level of imaginativeness to solve many of its current problems.

The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life by Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray (Free Press, 1994) is frightening, not because of what the authors have inferred regarding the abilities of African-Americans, but because it is a *déjà vu* experience concerning the extensive debates that occurred in the late 1960s through the middle 1970s. Many individuals who were graduate students during this period may recall the angry and voluminous responses (in articles and meetings) to Arthur Jensen's contention that blacks are inherently inferior to whites in intelligence (e.g., see his 1969 article, *How much can we boost IQ and scholastic achievement?* Harvard Educational Review, 39: 1-123). This article was preceded by many decades of rancorous debate on the nature of human intelligence among research psychologists concerned with studying individual differences in abilities. As a result of the criticisms of Jensen's work, compensatory education programs such as Head Start and Title I were designed to help remove environmental and educational barriers to minority students' full intellectual development. We will not discuss the findings of The Bell Curve at this time, but we believe the arguments surrounding this book have ignored teachers' successes with minority students. Rather than studying the practices and successes of teachers on the educational firing line, Herrnstein and Murray have used flawed correlational data to support their claims. Educators of the gifted should not use their arguments to obtain increased funds at the expense of compensatory education programs or to exclude ghetto minority groups from their programs. Instead, they should search for better solutions to serving non-middle class children, regardless of whether they are white, black, Native American, Hispanic, Asian or "other" ethnic groups.

In the search for information about teachers' and gifted children's perceptions of each other, we have included an article by Leigh Shelton – a relatively new teacher with just four years experience. Her article shows that gifted children are still being perceived negatively by regular education teachers. As a result, they suffer intellectually and emotionally. We applaud teachers like Shelton who speak out against this type of prejudice and discrimination. Another teacher with more extensive classroom experience has responded to Mara Sapon-Shevin's critique (*GEPQ*, Winter 1995) of Stephen Schroeder-Davis's review of her book (*GEPQ*, Fall 1994). Michael Walters has been teaching for almost twenty years in one of the most hard-core ghetto areas of the nation – the South Bronx in New York City.
MAURICE D. FISHER PUBLISHER

THE LORDS OF FLY: FINDING TEEN-AGE BLACK AND HISPANIC GIFTED STUDENTS *

* ("The Lords" refers to a gang name, while "Fly" is ghetto jargon for a *cool* thing or person.)

**BY DIANE D. GRYBEK SUPERVISOR, SECONDARY GIFTED PROGRAM
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There is good news and bad news. The good news is that more black students are now attending college than ever before (New York Times, 1992). The bad news is that the percentage of young students from most non-Caucasian backgrounds being identified for gifted programs has not changed in over twenty years – longer than most current gifted programs have existed (Anderson, 1987; Curry, 1990; Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students, 1976; Tsakaris, 1988), and this in an age of soaring minority enrollments. (Associated Press, 1991).

Since the early days of Head Start, it has been a sort of rule-of-thumb among educators that the IQs of minority students become depressed as they grow older. (Loretan and Umans, 1966). Presumably, these students are from "deprived" and "non-stimulating" environments, an observation undoubtedly meant in the sense of orientation to formal education. Certainly the neighborhoods where children from our poorest populations are to be found, whether Caucasian, black or Hispanic, although always stimulating and rich in texture, are much more stimulating in at least some sense than they were thirty years ago, if violent interpersonal events such as fighting, nightly shootings, high speed chases, clandestine activities and other events are to be considered. This change is probably an outgrowth of the crack cocaine epidemic, something few would have predicted. Inevitably the young are involved, first as observers, tragically often as innocent bystanders, then, well before maturity, as participants. And this is not only characteristic of our inner cities. In Florida, rural, Hispanic communities in agricultural zones experience the same problems, problems so bad that the majority of white, black, and Hispanic citizens drive miles out of their way to avoid these neighborhoods. There would seem to be a kind of stimulation here, but gifted children are found in percentages as low, or lower than twenty-five years ago. That is to say, the tested IQs continue to be below the Florida cut-off of two standard deviations above the mean. One may gather that random stimulation does not raise IQ. Does this mean that intelligent children are not to be found in these neighborhoods? More likely, children whose lives may be peppered with danger develop their intelligence along lines not considered on the tests we use. (Meyer and Jencks, 1989; New York Times Report, 1991).

It has long been argued that the so-called tests of

intelligence are biased. (Ford & Harris, 1990). Nevertheless, "the devastating effects that undereducated sub-populations can have on the cultural and financial future of the nation have been clearly documented." (Bermudez, 1989).

Gifted children occur in the same proportions among humans of all racial origins although they may operate differently. (Gardner, 1981, p. 4). But there is a great discrepancy in identification. Using the WISC and Binet R, such pretest screening devices that have been designed over the years, and a State of Florida definition of the "gifted" child as having a score on these measurements of two standard deviations above the mean, most school districts on which we have data have identified more Caucasians, far more Asians, fewer Hispanics and far fewer African-Americans than the above premise indicates. (Florida Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students, 10/15/91). Non-Caucasian students who are identified are most likely to come from families with middle class educations and aspirations, even if not middle class incomes. (Mayer & Jencks, 1989). Some research shows that test scores follow income (Nairn et al, 1980), others that it is more a matter of "lifestyle." (Clark, 1987).

Whatever the income, we need only visit most of our gifted classes to find those students who are being identified as gifted also may be described as quiet and soft spoken, polite, well behaved, capable of responding to directions, respectful, neat, clean, prompt, healthy looking and with an excellent command of standard English. (Warfel 1972). These traits do not require brains, only a caring set of adults who have the traits themselves to serve as role models and who can make time for delivery of certain cultural values, giving direction to the student's developing maturity. A little money for nice clothes helps as do parents who have the time and interest to read and converse with the child. (Slaughter-Defoe et al, 1990). The child who is angry, loud, impulsive, rude, even violent at times; who is dirty, or at least messy, whose class work is unprepared, homework is in tatters, who has not grown up with multiple possessions to play with and a room to keep neat (requiring sorting and organizing of possessions), who speaks a dialect of English – perhaps with a syntax unrecognized by most mainstream Americans, and certainly with a pronunciation rejected by the mainstream – will not be recommended for gifted

programs. Even when the student from such a background shows promise early on, he may lose ground academically, in effect "become stupider" with age unless great care is taken. It has been pointed out that IQ points tend to diminish as such children become more acculturated in the milieu in which they find themselves and move away from the values implicit on individual intelligence tests. It is not that they are not progressing, but as the fairy tale goes, they "will what we'd not have them will."

Starting with the assumption that the tests are not culture free, we are left with the same dilemma as the small town which only had one gambling establishment. Everyone knew that the games were "fixed," and not "games of chance" at all; yet everyone went there because it was the only game in town. There are some new measurements available, and we don't claim to have tried them all; however, a broad, unpublished statewide investigation in 1987 found no identification panaceas.

We assume that the presently used criteria act as some kind of a sieve for children whose parents have successfully entered the middle class, regardless of origin. Those children have an identity with middle class culture and values. One definition for "disadvantaged" is "children who have had one or more factors in their environment, background or education that cause a significant negative impact on the development of their academic or creative abilities." (Barstow, 1987). On the other hand, "The only way to get high scores is if you have everything going for you, including the positive alleles." (Holden, 1992). It's important to pick your parents carefully both for genes and social background. They need not be rich, but the right family can add many stimulating factors to a child's life such as getting read to and having a variety of experiences which center around her, and, ideally, some older person to interpret those experiences.

But after heredity and family nurturing, there is still the world outside the home. Non-Caucasian students from the most positive homes report great pressure from minority peers to recognize their origins by adopting behaviors of those peers. The message is, "Don't try to be white." To the extent that this peer pressure is negative, it affects achievement. Interestingly, white students also report pressure from peers to "fit in," not to "set the curve." The operational principal for the student is not to embarrass age peers. There are powerful people in the peer group, and they have their ways of getting even. But there is a profound multiplier effect for the minority child who has both age and ethnic peers to urge the masking of academic ability. It's a wonder that as many resist the pressure as do. (Frazier, 1991).

To paraphrase Shakespeare, perhaps the fault lies not in our tests, but in ourselves. And yet, in defense of tests, the test might find more students among diverse populations if we sent more to be tested. With this thought we look at those who screen the students for testing. We find that, by and large, those teachers, counselors, and even parents who nominate children who will ultimately be tested for the gifted program, while racially diverse, are culturally and solidly in the middle class. Among parents, those from backgrounds of hereditary poverty are unlikely (for a variety of reasons, some of which will be discussed) to push their child forward. In many cases, parents themselves have not internalized the importance of education beyond that necessary for an entry level or manual labor job. Able students may be discouraged, losing at home any progress in attitude they may have developed at school. (Worthy, 1990). Among professionals, it is difficult to move beyond cultural characteristics one has always been taught to value. (Casas, et al, 1986; Cayleff 1986). Few will find reason to recommend the child who does not speak in a manner pretty close to Standard English. It seems apparent that teachers (who tend to embrace the majority culture, regardless of their origins) and counselors must recognize gifted students, even in the face of behaviors they find disruptive. Checklists designed for identifying students who might be overlooked due to racial or cultural differences generally emphasize positive school behaviors. It is unlikely that many very young inner-city children have the internal fortitude to display such behaviors in school and risk isolation — or worse — on the way home. At the same time, many of the potentially gifted students we would be considering will have neither the academic nor social sophistication to survive being dropped into a class of gifted students identified by more obvious stratagems and who have been geared to the fast track for a lifetime.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The poorer the family, the more multipliers against "playing the school game." Poorer families tend to drift into neighborhoods of poorer families. Because of economic factors which require primary care givers to spend much time away, working, but not earning enough for food, rent and day care — or extra bus fare to get to free day care — parents must depend on relatives, neighbors and siblings only a little older to supervise their children. By necessity and for survival, children are encouraged to be independent almost from infancy: the most visible social group in these neighborhoods may be that of the young people "hanging out" on the streets. Growing up among adults too busy meeting basic needs (food/shelter/safety) to form bonds initiating the emerging adolescent as he grows past the mother-

centered years (Campbell, 1949), the children turn to one another, strengthening the normal childhood myth-life in which the adult (powerful person) may be subconsciously represented as the antagonist. The children form an anti-culture where adult goals (such as school rules) are to be opposed. The universal attractiveness of this is reinforced by Saturday children's television in which villains are always adults, and children (or very small people such as Smurfs) are always heroes. For all but the most disadvantaged white children, this attractive scenario from Grimm's Fairy Tales (Bettelheim, 1985) is temporary, clung to during a short period in which they are small and hence powerless. For too many minority students, it becomes a long-term fantasy, ever so much better than the real life they know. In real life no one they know achieves real power, except by breaking society's (school) taboos.

Except when bused to school, children from the inner-city have little opportunity to leave the familiar areas in their early years. They have only a limited understanding of the rules and workings of a world outside. Frequently the largest organization anyone they know functions in on a regular basis is the nuclear family; so they have little frame of reference for understanding the reasons for rules of organizational society, for school rules or for the rights of large, funny speaking – possibly, to them, funny looking – adults to order them around. If children have been semi-independent since diapers, how can they understand that they can only stand, sit, talk, play or go to the toilet after being given permission by one of these foreign creatures? They have made such decisions for themselves all their lives. Kindergarten must seem a very hostile place: small wonder if they reject school, even as they believe school is rejecting them. But some of them are gifted.

Joseph Campbell in his series on myths and culture, The Masks of God (1959), describes a cultural dichotomy between the individualism and macho competitive style of the hunter society versus the cooperative and group controlled style of the planter people. Bringing this comparison into the present focus may be easier if we consider the early child rearing styles of two neighborhoods to be found in many, if not most mid-sized cities today.

One neighborhood is populated primarily by professional and managerial class families. These families as a rule have two to three children each, often waiting until their late twenties or early thirties or beyond to leave the family. Children are valued very highly, and protected – or overprotected – accordingly. Mother, or a hired nanny, are always within an arm's reach, and, until they are seven or eight years old, at any time they

are outside the confines of the house or a fenced yard they are held by the hand, or at least by the invisible leash of a sharp voice. Well after their entry into school, they may under the more psychological confines of numerous rules concerning where it is permissible to go, with whom, and for how long. Nor must this community be white, middle class. Asian cultural groups, usually labeled a "minority," are often considered exemplary for high academic achievement. It has been suggested that the significant cultural variant may be the emphasis Asian families place on cooperativeness in family and community life. The sacrifice of the mother in the Japanese family is almost shocking to Westerners. She waits at home for her children, extra homework in hand. At night she sleeps in their rooms. (*Gifted Child Monthly*, 1987). An article on Southeast Asian boat people describes a similar family tradition. After supper all the children sit around the dinner table and do their school work together so the older ones can help the younger. It is the only group found where the achievement scores go up with each additional child in the family (Caplan et al, 1992).

The other neighborhood is populated primarily by poor, possibly unemployed families predominately with only one, usually female, adult in the house. Children are loved but often unexpected and even unwanted when they first appear. The parent is busy and exhausted and frequently tells the children to go somewhere else and stop bothering her. There is a strong feeling that they must become independent as soon as possible; and an observer in the neighborhood will see adults on the porches watching, but only interfering in life and death situations, as children as young as two-and-a-half scoot far up the block and even across the street to play with other children. The peer group becomes the socializing factor in their lives; and, in the absence of formal education, the powerful individuals of that peer group pass on their version of the myths of children through the oral tradition, inventing their culture. A culture in many important ways specific to that time and place. Little wonder that these children have difficulties adjusting to kindergarten and first grade programs in which adults micro manage their every activity.

Interestingly, Warfel (1962) described still another early childhood. This one lies between the two extremes described above, and while, in those places where children may still be safely raised with such Tom Sawyer freedom, it represents an almost bucolic ideal, but we may also miss many of the academically gifted. Still, nostalgia makes us think that among boys, at least, creativity would surely flourish here:

"He grows into language by two. By three he shows a

need for human companions outside the family circle and for knowledge. He asks many questions and makes few general statements. At four he wants companionship all the time, plays vigorously with his fellows, and talks much. By five he has a large measure of independence and roams the immediate neighborhood, a garrulous person who talks with everybody. At six he trudges to school and begins the long process of adding to his mastered language code the vocabulary and habit patterns that will shape him into a personality. His entire life in school is devoted to a language program and to the development of skills associated with language.

"The teenager begins to specialize in those activities in which his skills seem to come naturally. Usually there are sex differences. The restricted life of girls puts them quite fully into grown-up language because of their continuous talk with mother, aunts, grandmother, and neighbor ladies. Boys move away from home into gangs or teams. Teenage boys talk as their associates talk. Their concept of being grown-up is to imitate older – often ruder – boys. The source of juvenile delinquency often lies in unsatisfactory formal language training. Boys' skill in using teenage dialects shows their innate capacity for mastering a foreign language as well as their own. At this age personality and character become formed. If the home and school are doing a poor job, the boy's companions will supply reasons for his moving in his own direction. . . ."

If one were to apply Campbell's two cultures view on a yard-stick, the first generation Asian family would be far out on one end, representing the cooperative (planter) culture. The family of poverty, rejected, frustrated, consigned to ghettos would be at the other end, and middle class, Western tradition families would be only somewhat to the right of middle: neither releasing their children to the peer group at an early age, nor restricting them to the family dinner table homework society at the other. School achievement for each group correlates with this model.

When speaking of the importance of standard English for gifted students to use in situations external to their personal milieu, I have been told that this is regarded by some as de-valuing the culture of the home situation. There is no intention to do this. (As Warfel points out in the quoted paragraph just above, very often the real language of this teenager is as different from that of the home as it is from that of the counselor's home.) It is simply that for students to become effective in the society beyond the streets where they live, English should be regarded as the modern lingua franca. "The ability to read, speak and write standard English is the passport to

success in the larger community. Without this, students are denied access." (Carlson, 1991). The importance of English is that it is a tool for learning about life and cultures beyond one's own – the verbalized meaning of art, music and mathematics and for returning one's own thoughts on this to a larger community. It is also the tool for receiving education about one's self and one's ethnic community. In Europe and many countries of Asia, most students, whether gifted or otherwise, are taught English, often in immersion programs, throughout their school years simply because it is a part of being educated. Unfortunately, few of the underserved populations in this country have had access to such programs. It has become evident that a pernicious reason for failure to nominate students from presently underserved populations groups lies in the area of language use. (Stanley and Padilla, 1989). Few children who speak a heavily accented subgroup of standard English, whether black or Hispanic are ever referred for further evaluation. (Lambert et al, 1972; Warfel, 1962).

LOOKING BACK

There is little reason to recapitulate the evidence for the effects on intelligence (as we measure it) of an upbringing that varies widely from the cultural norm. These data have been known and published since, at the very least, the early sixties. It would insult the reader who has stayed the course to trot it out now. However, a quote from an article by Torrance in 1964 may be an useful reminder of an ongoing problem:

"The perceptions of educators and psychologists of creative possibilities among disadvantaged youths and children are also likely to be observed by behavior considered to be immoral, such as uncouth language, lying and cheating. It is most important that those who are searching for giftedness among such youngsters try to determine the positive possibilities the undesirable behavior indicates rather than being concerned only about what punishment is merited." (Loretan and Umans, 1966).

We knew that almost thirty years ago, but we have yet to find a way to put it into practice. How many times have we heard educators say, "I'm not going to reward a child who acts like that by putting him in the gifted program!" Could we be looking at some behaviors as "bad" when evidenced by minority – or just poor – students, but "typically gifted" when we see them in an affluent-gifted child?

The problem has been attacked numerous times by the Florida Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students. (1976). At one point a large number of proposed

measures were identified in a two year study (mentioned earlier) called the "Gifted and Talented Program Study." After nearly two years of research into potential measures of a wider range of intelligence, field testing was conducted by a local evaluation team in a multi-county investigation for the DOE. Unfortunately, no conclusive results occurred beyond the fact that there were no conclusive results. (Curry, 1990). Attempting to admit students to gifted programs from the overall student body on any recommended measure without first giving intensive training in thinking skills, appropriate behavior and general knowledge has the same effect as lowering the selection criteria. This did not significantly change the percentages of minorities admitted.

In our initial screening, we must ask ourselves: What are the "blockers" to selecting children for gifted classes who are not in the mainstream? What common characteristics of gifted ethnic Hispanic and black children make them different from teacher perceptions of giftedness in mainstream children? What are the "windows"? What characteristics shine through, and where? And when? Where must we stand to see through those windows the things by which we may know these children?

The purpose then of our search for effective means of assessing minority students, is to explore alternative screening procedures for nominating preadolescents from cultures of poverty. They do not reflect the assumptions underlying current identification procedures about how intelligence is expressed. Simply, how do smart minority students act smart? Then, having made a selection by changing the outlook of the selectors, how do we make such behavioral changes in the selectees that they may find success among age peers who are not only from more mainstream backgrounds, but who have been in the program longer? (Casas, 1986). Counseling will be essential, not only to assist newly identified students to be comfortable in their new role, but in existing gifted classes with the earlier identified students and their teachers to develop broader views of how intelligence may be expressed.

Perhaps it is important not even to start from a position of children's needs. This translates into "what can we do for these kids and only reinforces the "adults have power, children (we) have none" mental set which they are already oriented to oppose. We must start from the strengths of these students. We must find them by their strengths. We already do this to some extent with highly gifted students: they often have the same fantasies which, in their case, may not arise from forced neglect, but because the extremely precocious child so often finds adults who are not prepared for confrontation with their

intellectual power.

Consider the following quotation from Campbell in terms of the gang member in a poor neighborhood as he sees his classroom teacher versus the gang leader.

"The contrast between the two world views may be seen more sharply by comparing the priest and the shaman. The priest is the socially initiated, ceremonially inducted member of a recognized . . . organization, where he holds certain rank and functions as the tenant of an office that was held by others before him, while the shaman is one who, as a consequence of a personal psychological crisis, has gained a certain power of his own." (1959).

If we were to consider the teen age gang as a hunting band, it might be observed that in many ways it mimics that medieval outgrowth of the hunting band, the secret society. (Knight, 1984). Individuals have emotional ties of honor to like groups, whom they have never met. There are recognition systems: articles of clothing, hand shakes and hand signals known only to certain other "fly" individuals who are privy to the inner knowledge and passed on through the oral tradition. The gang leader, the "shaman," holds his office through the (usually) informal consent of the group, gained via certain charismatic power (which may have been earned in the age old tradition of the alpha male among all social species by beating up all contenders). And there is the sense which these totems vouchsafe the membership that they are special, and therefore a little better than any other group or individual.

It's the leader, the "shaman" and some of his lieutenants we would most like to draw into our gifted programs. Whether we can offer any rewards in an ambiguous future that would be as satisfying as the ego trip he is presently on is not clear. In any case, there are certainly others who might be wooed away: wannabe shamans, those on the edge who have not been able to suppress their own personalities enough to be true followers, would be some of those among whom we might cast our nets.

What strengths do these First World shamans have? We must keep in mind that their strengths may be against middle class values. They have anger, chutzpah, manipulativeness, streetwiseness, secretiveness. How can we use these?

THE PLAN

To seek answers, a group of interested individuals, each hailing from black or Hispanic origins examined these

assumptions and agreed they represented a factor to be considered in the search for high intelligence among students from the culture of poverty, regardless of other cultural variants. If we are to reach the best of these students, the lure to another group must be strong. The true story of Jaime Escalante (Meek, 1989) as depicted in the movie "Stand and Deliver" demonstrates how one teacher used empowerment as an enticement. If we are to proceed along the lines of the "hunter society" described in a different context by Campbell, we must look through the hunter's eyes – in this case the leader's or shaman's eyes, for they are most likely to be the potentially gifted that we seek. These young people are immersed in a group in which they have a high level of respect, even reverence. Like gifted students everywhere they have seen adults as a peer group since they were small – and why not? The mental age of a highly gifted early adolescent is equivalent to that of the average adult. One result is that gifted students at this age don't give their teachers the automatic respect we would like to see just for being teachers. However, middle class students (from what parallels the "planter" society) know the rules: Play the (adult's) game, don't get caught, don't show off, getting "in the teacher's face" is stupid. Don't cross certain lines. (That is not to say they are passive, well-behaved young people. Any teacher of secondary gifted students knows what kinds of mind games they play: the teacher who doesn't, will not last as a teacher of gifted students.)

The "shaman" also plays by the rules, but he has a different set of rules, even a different set of mind games. He comes from a milieu in which he has more power from his gang than any adult he knows has from any source (more than his parents, more than the teacher). Moreover, the rules of his group require him to play at the edge. If he doesn't like what the teacher tells him to do, his response is likely to be two words that might get him suspended. The prime directive for the shaman, gang leader or would-be gang leader is, "Thou must not lose face among thy followers," who are in the class watching. (The teacher's power may be limited, but ultimately it derives from the state. If the gang leader misreads the teacher's willingness to invoke that power, he could be in trouble. On the other hand he – and, we hope, the teacher – know that if the teacher invokes that power too many times, she is in trouble for not being able to control the class.)

It has been pointed out a depressing number of times that it's easier to find minority students when they are very young – before the beliefs and behaviors of the underclass are indelible. If we could identify all gifted students in the early years, our job would be easier. Too many slip by. Of these, students with middle class

orientation may get picked up later, but few educators are even looking for the students we have been discussing at this age (of about eleven to fourteen).

Our group looked at a number of existing checklists which seemed to be seeking a child who is already getting nominated – the motivated child who is already trying to work hard, get along and ahead, and who is willing to take direction. It seemed to us that too many of the children we were concerned with had "smarts," but no way to get on the nomination list because of failure to adjust to the necessarily autocratic philosophy of school. So we looked for students who challenged the teacher (often found on "gifted" checklists) for power. And we looked for humor – the underlying humor insults so often used in interchanges on the street, used here between students, but with the hidden agenda of controlling the class. Do middle class students do these things? They do. But they often get nominated because they have other behaviors that offset the undesirable ones. They know how to "play the game" on the school's terms. After several meetings, two checklists were approved. One for the leader types described above, and the other for what we termed "wannabes." The latter was more like familiar nomination checklists, but calling on specific behaviors we had observed. Obviously neither list can be used in isolation – other screening procedures are required. Nor will either list inundate us with referrals. We hope that some of those that do come will be unique to this system. The reason for two lists instead of combining the two into one was bureaucratic. The state of Florida requires "a majority" of characteristics on a checklist. On checklists looking for students so different, it would be harder to assess a "majority" if combined. These checklists were presented to several groups with a positive overall reception: They included teacher groups from across a large district with multiethnic diversity. Many were gifted teachers. Others were professionals with a minority background. Following approval of the district's "Plan for Identifying Gifted Students From Underserved Populations," it was included in screening procedures beginning in the fall of 1992. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

(Further Observations on Minority Students. The comparison of present minority cultures with that of emigrants from Eastern European countries in the late nineteenth century is often deemed invidious. After all, it is reasoned, whites can disappear among other whites. Yet for many, theirs was a culture base so strong that much of it remains today among the third generation in the form of ethnic clubs, radio stations, etc. Although we don't face the fact, it is too often true that third generation children who remain too close to the old country culture may be doomed to spend their lives

performing repetitive, physical tasks in factories, regardless of intelligence. What else could one who dressed in the working class manner and said "Dis, an dat" expect? Only through education can they move on, but education will also tend to erase the signs of an ethnic past. The advantage of the Caucasian appearance may not be readily available until the third generation and beyond.

The cohesiveness extends to the community. We have summer programs for gifted students from the seventh to twelfth grades at our two local universities. They are always disproportionately attended by Asian students, often primarily from a recent wave of emigration: one year Japanese, then Korean and Chinese, and still another year Southeast Asian. Lately many students have been from the Near East and India. Frequently they are not even residents of our county, but request special placement for the summer. One Indian family -- in which the father works in Egypt where the children attend school -- maintains a *pied-a-terre* in Tampa, and the mother and children return each summer for these classes. A newsletter among the cultural community keeps all informed of these opportunities for their children. The children, in their turn, do not question the decisions their parents have made for them, feeling they are meant for their good.)

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A TEACHER'S OBSERVATIONS ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GIFTED CHILDREN

BY LEIGH A. SHELTON ROCKWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Discrimination in any sense of the word is wrong. The more overt cases reported today target skin color, gender, age, religion, and nationality. There is a type of discrimination, however, that occurs in classrooms across the United States and that goes far deeper than outward appearance. Students with high academic ability are consistently punished for their gifts. The effect of this discrimination is educational inequity and perhaps more importantly, a wounded soul.

It is frightening to consider some of the blatant discrimination and emotional abuse gifted children suffer at the hands of educators. Unfortunately, some of the very people who are in the position of both educating and nurturing our youth, are the ones degrading and ridiculing them through discrimination. The immediate effect of this treatment is the child's wounded soul. The sad part of this treatment is that it is very hurtful to the child. The logical thinker, however, would also realize this type of destructive treatment of people has a profound effect on their place in and response to society. The discriminatory treatment of gifted students not only affects the individual, but society.

Because of the added emotional needs of gifted students, the building in which I teach designates a twenty-minute period each day to deal with their affective needs. The structure of this time frame differs from classroom to classroom. There are lessons completed on perfectionism, group dynamics, and self-esteem. The majority of my time, however, is spent getting to know the students and allowing them time to get to know one another and themselves. I often use The Kid's Book of Questions by Gregory Stock (Workman Publishing, 1988) as a catalyst for many discussions. An interesting discussion followed the question: "Do you think boys or girls have it easier?"

My students snickered a bit and gave their opinions. The characteristic mature sense of humor of the gifted came to light when one of the boys said with a laugh, "Well boys are getting cheated in the classroom!"

It was interesting that Jim, a fifth grader, had been watching *20/20* and *60 Minutes* and was aware of the studies, and even more ironic that he made the connection to our discussion. A few minutes later, however, a look of seriousness came over his face and he said, "To be serious, I really believe gifted kids are getting cheated in the classroom."

This comment set the tone of the discussion for the remainder of the time. Students were allowed to speak specifically about situations, but were asked not to mention names of students or teachers they were discussing. This was not a teacher bashing session, but instead, students being honest about their hurt feelings. As with adults, children also need time to vent their frustrations. As a gifted educator, part of my job is to meet those affective needs. What follows is a list of examples of teacher discrimination:

I don't think my teacher likes gifted kids very much.

When I missed two (answers) on my social studies test last week, my teacher announced who got the highest grade to the whole class. Then she said, 'She even beat Mary's score, and Mary is supposed to be gifted!'

When I asked my math teacher to help me with a problem she said, 'You're gifted – you figure it out.'

It's almost like you have to pay to be gifted.

My teacher told me I had not turned in one of my assignments that I knew I had, and she wanted me to do it over. I told her that I was sure I had put it in the homework basket, could she please recheck her grade book before I did it again. She then screamed to the whole class, 'Well, Sue here seems to think I made a mistake and wants me to go back through and recheck myself. She wants me to do this and I will not get your quizzes graded before you go. Is that what everyone wants?' (After Sue had redone her assignment, the teacher recorded it in the grade book, and realized that she had been looking at the student above Sue on the roster. She had turned in the homework. Sue was there to witness the realization, but no apology was uttered.)

My teacher calls on us (gifted kids) when our hands aren't raised instead of when they are. It's like she wants to embarrass us when we don't know the answer. I don't know why people think we should know everything just because we're in the gifted program. My friends who aren't in it are a lot better in some subjects than me.

Do these comments sound like anything that should come out of a adult's mouth—even worse, a teacher's mouth? Do these teachers think at all about some of the implications their tongue lashings have on my super sensitive students? Furthermore, what sort of example are they providing for students when they are modeling the ridiculing of another human being?

The very foundation of this country is based on the idea that everyone has the right to an equal education. Unless gifted students are challenged to reach their potential and beyond, they are not getting an equal education. The students in the above scenarios are not being challenged to reach their potential. Instead, their potential is ignored. Regardless of the teachers', administrators', or the other parents' views, gifted students deserve a challenging curriculum; just as learning disabled students deserve remedial intervention. Gifted students also deserve to be treated as human beings like other students.

While the field of gifted education has made great strides in the area of curriculum, it still lacks overall understanding of gifted students and their affective needs. Inservice training dealing with gifted students would be of great benefit to teachers, students and society as a whole. If we don't deal directly with these issues, we will be educating people

who grow up to discriminate against the gifted, not to mention the emotional scars that will be inflicted on these children by denying them what is rightfully theirs: an equal education.

Finding a solution to the problem requires the identification of the various facets of the problem. A portion of the discrimination exhibited toward academically gifted students and their special needs comes from those who believe that testing does not always identify giftedness. Being a poor test-taker helps me to realize there are probably many who slip between the cracks of the system. But because this method of determining giftedness is not foolproof, does not mean we should halt the identification of those undoubtedly in need.

The self-esteem of the teacher is often at issue. Academically gifted students sometimes pose a threat to the teacher's intelligence. Inservice training, which helps educators accept the fact that gifted students will often know more than they do about a specific topic, would probably also help to develop more positive attitudes toward these special needs students. It is not only acceptable for a teacher to proclaim, "I don't know, let's see if we can find the answer," but would be ideal, so that he/she demonstrates it is okay to not know everything, and it is okay to ask questions.

Support for gifted education should not only be modeled by administrators throughout the district, but should be demanded of teachers. Simply put, accepting student differences is a job responsibility of the teacher. What happens in the business world when workers ignore their responsibilities? Why in education, is it so easy to ignore a critical group of children without suffering any ramifications?

The most serious effect of these issues is the attack on the soul of the child. The result of constant degradation is a broken-soul which gives a student no confidence or desire to succeed. The resulting discrimination not only affects the academics of the students but also their social adjustment. Many gifted students are already suffering a lower self-concept than their non-gifted counterparts. If they continue to suffer from this discrimination, as with any discrimination, they could become leery of others and develop an attitude of mistrust. A poor educational experience is the short term issue. The emotional scars, however, will remain with gifted children and undoubtedly affect their response to society.

Discrimination is wrong, regardless of who is the victim, child or adult. If it were to stop at young ages, schools would no longer be perpetuating negative attitudes and poor self-concepts. The school's job is to educate students with the skills needed to succeed independently in the future, regardless of academic ability. The skills I refer to are not only academic. I reflect on the ludicrous scenarios I have described and ask myself, just what type of education are we providing? $\Upsilon \Sigma \Psi \quad \Upsilon \Sigma \Psi \quad \Upsilon \Sigma \Psi$

RESPONSE TO MARA SAPON-SHEVIN'S COMMENTS IN THE WINTER 1995 *GEPQ*

BY MICHAEL E. WALTERS NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

As a teacher of many disadvantaged gifted children during the last 20 years in the South Bronx, I deal with the everyday practical realities of teaching rather than with theoretical constructs. My observations concerning Sapon-Shevin's rebuttal (*GEPQ, Winter 1995*) are as follows:

"As I was going up the stair
I met a man who wasn't there.
He wasn't there again today.
I wish, I wish, he'd go away."
John Donne (1573-1631)

Sapon-Shevin is disturbed by the person who is always at the stair although she never encounters this constant presence -- the fact of human uniqueness is what she wishes would go away. It troubles her conscience that there might be educational and social inequities as long as human sensibility and giftedness are used as criteria for placing children in special programs. In her "brave new world," the unique abilities of human beings are equally distributed. Genius is verboten in her "community of learners." This word has its roots in being original or unique, and is also

used to express appreciation for people who show unique forms of creativity and thought.

Sapon-Shevin perceives gifted education as a disrupter of community. Two major types of community have occurred in the 20th century, totalitarian and democratic communities. The former is represented by the Fascist Corporate State, the Stalinoid People's Republic and theocratic religious fundamentalism. The democratic community is represented by a society where individuals are tolerant of each other's uniqueness. The totalitarian community is based upon mandated equity and statistical justice. In contrast, the democratic community stresses equality of opportunity where individuals are encouraged to develop their own unique sensibility.

The tone of Sapon-Shevin's rebuttal is that of a person who holds collective social justice as the highest priority. Perhaps she should reread Plato's writings which show that people have debated the question of "what is justice" for thousands of years. It doesn't matter whether one accepts the ideas expressed in Plato's Republic. What is important is that our society needs a continuous symposium on what the word "justice" means. To Sapon-Shevin, it is similar to John Ryan's "distributive justice" paradigm (A Theory of Justice, Harvard University Press, 1971). According to this paradigm, we will only have a just society when skills, talents and giftedness are literally demonstrated by politically correct statistical data. Schroeder-Davis has a different vision of justice. His is a just society where everyone has an equal opportunity to develop their abilities as a result of demonstrated accomplishments. Fallacious statistical formulas do not play a role in his conception of equality and justice. Sapon-Shevin perceives the classroom teacher as the commissar of educational equity, while Schroeder-Davis perceives this teacher as a guru of educational opportunity.


The presence of different levels and types of individual sensibility troubles Sapon-Shevin. In her classroom, there are group sensibilities, not individual ones because individual sensibility cannot be programmed, charted, designed by teacher trainers and plotted via mastery learning flow charts. Individual sensibility is influenced by a complex network of cultural factors such as family structure, individual philosophy, human interaction, inspiration, encouragement and role modeling.

This debate is concerned with more than gifted education. It is about models of human endeavor. Sapon-Shevin seeks equity and justice supported by statistical formulas. Schroeder-Davis wants a society whose model of human endeavor is the freedom to develop individual sensibility and giftedness. Winston Churchill said that he preferred an imperfect democracy over a perfect totalitarian society. The imperfections of Schroeder-Davis's approach at least maintain respect for the human condition while Sapon-Shevin's taste is to indulge in conditioning the human psyche.

"But what, then am I? A thinking thing, it has been said. But what is a thinking thing? It is a thing that doubts, understands (conceives), affirms, denies, wills, abstains from willing, that also can be aware of images and sensations." René Descartes (1596-1650).



QUOTE OF THE MONTH --

"Creativity, as usually understood, entails not only a 'what,' a talent, but a 'who' – strong personal characteristics, a strong identity, personal sensibility, a personal style, which flow into the talent, interfuse it, give it personal body and form. Creativity in this sense involves the power to originate, to break away from the existing ways of looking at things, to move freely in the realm of the imagination, to create and recreate fully in one's mind – while supervising all this with a critical inner eye. Creativity has to do with inner life – with the flow of new ideas and strong feelings." *Oliver Sacks. January 9, 1995. "Neurologist's Notebook: Prodigies." The New Yorker. p. 65.* 

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During the last three months, I have been reading and observing mailing lists and newsgroups on the Internet. The participants have been mainly teachers, parents and graduate students. For anyone concerned with the future of gifted children in the United States, these discussion groups present a fascinating picture of their ideas on such topics as the pros and cons of acceleration, discussions of mathematics and science curricula for the gifted, statements from parents about their young gifted children's future in the public schools, disapproval of the use of a single test score to identify gifted children, opposition to abolishing Javits legislation for research on gifted education, and criticisms of heterogeneous grouping. The variety and volume of discussions are amazing and sometimes frustrating and outrageous. However, they generally indicate strong interest among parents, teachers, librarians and school administrators in providing the gifted with the best possible and most challenging education.

It is difficult to summarize discussions of these topics. But it appears that most of the discussants who address matters related to classroom organization believe that heterogeneous grouping-inclusion-cooperative learning (HG-I-CL) are detrimental to gifted children. Regarding curriculum, they are searching for rigorous subject matter materials to help teachers present a differentiated curriculum. These Interneters are not going "the way the wind is blowing" by supporting the HG-I-CL classroom.

Participate in the Internet mailing lists and newsgroups (GIFTEDNET-L, TAGFAM, TAG-L and K12.ED.TAG) to learn about different viewpoints expressed by parents and teachers. These viewpoints are not evident in articles published in the national journals such as the *Gifted Child Quarterly* and *Roeper Review*. In many ways, the Internet groups are more supportive of differential education for the gifted than is apparent in the academic community.

The Internet is like a very open, democratic, chaotic, Wild-West environment. Everyone is equal; they can usually say what they want – and they do! Anyone can receive resounding support or get "shot-down" very quickly. It provides a healthy means for openly discussing issues of great importance to our nation's gifted children. In a free society such as ours, this is obviously how it should be. How these sometimes raucous discussions can translate into mediate positive action for gifted education is not clear.

In subsequent issues of *GEPQ*, I will discuss the benefits of other areas of the Internet such as the World Wide Web.

This issue introduces four new authors associated with *Gifted Education Press*. Ross Butchart has been a teacher and administrator in the Vancouver, British Columbia school system for over twenty-five years. He has taught grades 4 through 7 in both open area and closed classrooms, and developed one of the first grade 7 literature based programs in his district. While teaching in an elementary-middle school program for gifted students, he conceived of using quotations to create enriching classroom activities – an idea that led to writing his book, Quotations for Creative Insights and Inspiration: A Quotations Based Humanities Curriculum for Gifted Students and Their Teachers in Middle and High School (1995). Butchart's article includes the rationale for using great quotations to teach the gifted about the great ideas of Western civilization. In this regard, *Gifted Education Press* has published nine books that emphasize a humanities curriculum for the gifted. Hundreds of school districts have used these books in their differential education programs.

The authors of the second article are Patricia A. Gabriel, Ann M. De Young and Sandra K. Bajema of Jenison and Grandville Public Schools in Michigan. They have completed a book entitled, Outcomes for Gifted Learners (1995) that will be published by *Gifted Education Press* in the Fall of 1995. *GEPQ* also published a detailed article by them in the Summer 1994 issue that discussed how specific axioms from Dr. Virgil S. Ward's *Differential Education for the Gifted* (DEG) theory can be applied to designing an Outcomes Based Curriculum. The current article is excerpted from their forthcoming book, and summarizes the key ideas contained in their OBE model of gifted education. Their imagination and creativity are demonstrated in their choice of a "swimming metaphor" to show how Ward's theory can be applied to the classroom.

Michael E. Walters examines multicultural education and the gifted child. He shows how the sculptor Constantin Brancusi, the composer Igor Stravinsky and the writer Ernest Hemingway were all dyed-in-the-wool multiculturalists.

Maurice D. Fisher, Publisher *Gifted Education Press*
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USING QUOTATIONS TO CHALLENGE GIFTED STUDENTS BY ROSS BUTCHART VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

INTRODUCTION

How much do you really know? Let's try a short quiz. Quickly identify the authors of the following quotations. I have even organized space for you to complete the correct answers:

1. The pen is mightier than the sword.

2. Wonders will never cease.

3. Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

Admit it! Even though these are well known quotations you probably had difficulty identifying the author of even one of the three. Yet why should this be so? Have quotations today diminished in value to become nothing more than challenges in a game of Trivial Pursuit?

I trust not. For I believe they are very much more than a source of entertainment. Quotations are succinct expressions which capture man's ten thousand years of recorded history while a citizen of this earth. Those that survive from the past have done so because they best embody the distinguishing qualities of human character, the good as well as the bad - all hopes and ambitions, all despairs and anguishes, all virtues and excellencies, all vicissitudes and tribulations, even all hatreds and bigotries. Quotations are, in essence, the very voice of history expressed through the words of those who lived a finite period within its span. And as Clifton Fadiman reminds, "We are all citizens of history."

I first became aware of the power of quotations as a unique learning resource when I was asked to teach a multi-grade class (grades 4-7) of gifted students four years ago. Like many when confronted with a new challenge about which they have partial knowledge, I first wanted to know what literature existed in the field of my ignorance that could offer insight and suggest a direction I might pursue. But while my investigation was ambitious, I soon became overwhelmed by the absence of helpful information.

A spate of resource manuals and other writings abounded,

of that there was no doubt. But most seemed published to address issues and complexities surrounding identification of the gifted or to explain the many curriculum models in existence, areas of interest more for the bureaucratic mandarins of the educational system or the gurus of educational theory, rather than to offer useful guidance for the classroom teacher.

Frustrated by this emphasis on process over product, I was reminded of the wisdom of John W. Gardner (Self-Renewal: The Individual and The Innovative Society. Harper & Row, 1963, p. 58):

"But goals are achieved by some *means*, and sooner or later even the most impulsive man of action will discover that some ways of achieving the goal are more effective than others. A concern for *how* to do it is the root impulse in all great craftsmanship, and accounts for all of the style in human performance. Without it we would never know the peaks of human achievement.

"Yet, ironically, this concern for 'how it is done' is also one of the diseases of which societies die. Little by little, preoccupation with method, technique and procedure gains a subtle dominance over the whole process of goal seeking. How it is done becomes more important than *whether* it is done. Means triumph over ends. Form triumphs over spirit. Method is enthroned. Men become prisoners of their procedures, and organizations that were designed to achieve some goal become obstacles in the path to that goal.

"A concern for 'how to do it' is healthy and necessary. The fact that it often leads to an empty worship of method is just one of the dangers with which we have to live."

This is not to say I did not find the readings interesting and informative. But limited as most were to outlining specific management processes or extolling the accomplishments of the likes of Bloom, Taylor, Williams, Krathwohl, and Renzulli - "preoccupation with method" at best - they offered few, if any, practical solutions to my immediate problem.

I was teaching in a seventy-year-old building. My classroom possessed a heating system which, at random, turned this setting either into a freezer or a sauna, and a total of two electrical outlets, neither of which allowed two devices to be used simultaneously without tripping the

breaker panel. I had a variety of subject textbooks for the grades I was teaching, a small collection of novels, and one archaic computer complete with tractor printer - but no software for its use. With these I was to achieve wonders.

Furthermore, I was a firm believer - and still am - in the principle of Stephen R. Covey, "Begin with the end in mind." This I felt was the way to prevent myself from becoming a prisoner of procedures and adopting 'an empty worship of method.' Yes, I had a definite vision of the qualities I hoped to inculcate in my students and understood the methods by which I hoped to accomplish my goals. But a unique curriculum comprising a content that would stimulate the interests and challenge the intellects of my young charges was a very necessary component of the total scheme. Yet content, for all intents and purposes, was regarded as little more than an open-ended consideration of minor significance.

Finally, I looked to areas where I might create my own curriculum. Eventually I decided to test the possibilities of two relatively common but overlooked resources: articles selected from the local newspapers, and quotations selected from the annals of recorded thought. For several days I put in considerable time selecting appropriate materials and creating activities to adapt them for use in the classroom.

It was not long, however, before I realized the truth in what Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) had stated so eloquently in the last century, "The wisdom of the wise and the experience of the ages are perpetuated by quotations." They were truly a remarkable teaching resource that held considerable benefit, but had remained virtually untapped, their potential ignored, for no other reason than their merits had never been investigated. This was an oversight that clearly warranted correction.

A QUOTATIONS-BASED CURRICULUM: ITS VALUE

Quotations are an introduction to the great thinkers of history.

Unfortunately, many students regard great ideas as exclusive products of the modern era, even of their own lifetime. Such a notion imposes limitations which only distort historical reality and narrow the perspective of its believer. For such as these George Santayana's statement that, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." might better read, "Those who do not recognize the past are condemned to ignorance of its lessons." And one as great as Lao Tzu (c. 604-531 B.C.) certainly knew of its many lessons:

"Hold fast to the way of antiquity

In order to keep in control the realm of today."

As did Thomas Moore:

"Our Renaissance and Romantic ancestors, as well as

Freud, Jung, and Hillman and their colleagues, all turn to the past for a renewal of their imaginations."

The lessons of history are indeed many in number.

Consider how most recall that Abraham Lincoln once stated, "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy." Yet some 1500 years earlier Aristotle observed, "Democracy arose from men's thinking that if they are equal in any respect, they are equal absolutely." We can be certain, though, that if anyone was influenced by the other, it was Lincoln who was influenced by the writings of Aristotle - not the reverse.

Gifted students are definitely not beyond an awareness that much wisdom resides in the depths of history. They can fully appreciate how great people of the modern era were moved by the words of those from previous generations. This realization has educational potential in that it allows them the challenge of discovering and studying the lives of great thinkers from the past whose ideals influenced those in more modern times. Thus, the inspirational teacher is able to structure assignments through which his students understand and value the continuity of history.

Quotations are an introduction to the context in which historical events unfold.

History does not occur in a vacuum. When Marie Antoinette declared, "Then let them eat cake." she did so in the context of political, religious, social, and economic conditions that existed at the onset of the French Revolution. Her quotation invites gifted students not only to investigate these conditions, but to expand their findings beyond basic research to include questions such as:

- Did similar conditions exist during revolutionary periods in other countries (e.g. The American Revolution, The Russian Revolution)?
- Did similar conditions exist at other times but not result in revolutionary activities (e.g. The Great Depression)?
- What significance does Marie Antoinette's quotation have that has allowed it to remain a part of historical account to this day?
- Are there other quotations that reveal how political leadership was woefully ignorant of reality (e.g. "I believe it is peace for our time." - Neville Chamberlain, September 30, 1938)?

Through such comparisons and explorations students are subtly taught to seek the context of meaning in which events occur. Thus, they learn that events themselves are frequently only the symptom of a greater malaise.

One characteristic of the creative person is his ability to perceive a realistic impression of history. For when someone disassociates himself from present time and forms new imaginative connections with the way things were during a previous era he is forced to invoke many of the dominant characteristics of this trait. James C. Coleman elaborates on the benefits: "Human progress has always depended most on those . . . whose minds are endlessly receptive and flexible and active."

Here again quotations are valuable in that they supply a solid plank in a curriculum framework that allows the gifted student to expand his creativity. For how else to gain an accurate perception of history but to explore the insights of those who lived it?

Quotations allow students to confront contradiction.
Consider the following quotations:

"The great creative individual is capable of more wisdom and virtue than collective man ever can be."
- John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)

"No member of a crew is praised for the rugged individuality of his rowing."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

Both authors lived during the same time period. Both are renowned as men of scholarly repute. Yet obviously both cannot be correct. So whom do we believe?

A conundrum such as the above poses a stimulating intellectual challenge for the gifted student. It also satisfies the theorists in that its demands on the student fall within the parameters of many curriculum models. For example, in terms of Bloom's Taxonomy it fits well within the *Evaluation* dimension - the domain requiring the highest level of cognitive skill. Given the problem of determining whether the individual or the group is capable of greater accomplishment the student must formulate viable criteria which support a reasonable solution. What should these criteria be? What measures should be established as tests of their validity?

In terms of William's model for implementing cognitive and affective behaviors it promotes a *Tolerance for Ambiguity* - a key strategy of teaching within its three-dimensional framework. The two quotations, taken together as a contradictory riddle, provide a situation intended to puzzle thinking within an open-ended challenge. While valuable as an intellectual activity alone, this also opens avenues to different modes of teaching - a challenge for the student to design an experiment that will produce an acceptable solution, a search for further quotations that substantiate the student's position, a journal in which the student, through sensitivity to intuition, records his awareness of

inner 'hunches' over a period of time - these to name but a few.

Quotations allow students to assess literary merit.
Two great thinkers address the same theme:

"Little strokes fell great oaks."
- Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)

"Slow and steady wins the race."
- Aesop (c. 6th century B.C.)

- Who expresses the theme better? Why?
- What criteria of superiority should apply?
- Should the time period in which both authors lived affect your judgment?
- Should the fact that one quotation is a translation from its original language have any bearing upon your decision?
- Can you rewrite the theme using another literary technique?
- Why do you think these two quotations have survived to this day?

Questions such as these related to 'simple' quotations stimulate the gifted student to explore different modes of literary expression as well as those techniques which render them most persuasive. A reasonable expansion would then be for him to undertake an assignment similar to the following:

Each of the following quotations relies on metaphor to make its impact:

"TV - chewing gum for the eyes."
- Frank Lloyd Wright (1869-1959)

"Books, the children of the brain."
- Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)

- Which of the two is the more effective? Why?
- Restate the theme of either quotation using a different figure of speech.

Quotations are a source of moral guidance.

To read the daily newspaper, to watch the nightly news on TV - such activities frequently reinforce the perception that the world is a rudderless vessel devoid of moral direction. Through the media, violence, greed, abuse, betrayal of trust, selfishness - all are endlessly depicted as the conduct of the times. Therapists of every philosophy and approach who are interviewed testify to the impact. Daily they encounter the same emotional complaints in their practices: depression, disillusionment, spiritual emptiness, loss of meaningful values, lack of personal fulfilment.

Gifted students are not oblivious to the pervasive nature of the symptoms. Nor are they impervious to the dilemmas that accompany a time characterized by the absence of worthy values. But it is within a moral void that substantive values are often most ardently sought. Quotations in the curriculum offer a source of comfort and foster individual responsibility. When chosen wisely, they embody enduring principles of virtue, ethics, morality, and integrity admired by all cultures throughout the continuum of time.

"Test for yourself your capacity for the good man's life; the life of one content with his allotted part in the universe, who seeks only to be just in his doings and charitable in his ways."

- Marcus Aurelius (121-180)

"And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

- The Bible (Micah 6:8)

"Morality is not properly the doctrine of how we may make ourselves happy, but how we may make ourselves worthy of happiness"

- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

"Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

"Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as is cooperation with good."

- Mohandas Gandhi

"Six essential qualities that are the key to success: Sincerity, personal integrity, humility, courtesy, wisdom, charity."

- Dr. William Menninger

"The so-called new morality is too often the old immorality condoned."

- Lord Shawcross

"Righteousness exalteth a nation."

- The Bible (Proverbs 14:34)

"Civilizations do not give out, they give in.

In a society where anything goes, eventually, everything will."

- John Underwood

Regardless of the style of writing, when written, by whom, whether intended for the individual or the many; each conveys a didactic message that is either thought-provoking, a signpost for its reader, or both. The wise teacher can use these judiciously to suggest direction without losing credibility with his students by appearing to moralize.

A QUOTATIONS-BASED CURRICULUM: ITS PRODUCTS

Quotations are a powerful focus for self-directed learning which permit students to produce a variety of products. Three of these - research reports, experiments, and journals - I referred to earlier. However, given their potential, these and others warrant further discussion.

Reconsider Jonathan Swift's quotation, "Books, the children of the brain.", not in the context of its literary value alone, but in terms of its expanded uses. For example, as a topic for a research paper it offers possibilities such as:

- What role(s) did books play in society during Swift's lifetime? Were they as pervasive as TV is in our society today?
- Research and report how the publishing process has changed over the centuries.

Or, as straight exposition it allows students to address such a question as: Will books survive in the future? Even as a scientific study it can encourage an assignment similar to the following: Design a questionnaire to determine what types of books, based on the gender and age of the reader, are most frequently read by students in your school.

Quotations, as we have also seen already, often suggest a topic that can be validated through experimentation. Mill's and Emerson's previously-stated observations about whether the individual or the group is capable of greater accomplishment is one such example that I have witnessed students put to the test --

The class first discussed the problem, then formulated individual hypotheses. As a group, they decided to use the survival game, *Lost on the Moon*, to test their assumptions. They determined that the class would be divided at random into two groups: one-third were to confront the problem individually, while the remaining two-thirds were further

divided into groups of three and expected to arrive at a solution through consensus.

But once the tasks were begun, unforeseen problems quickly surfaced. Since the individuals were completing the problem in considerably less time than the groups, should a time limit be imposed? Or should speed as well as accuracy be a separable variable to be taken into account? How was efficiency to be measured? And how best to document it given that seven groups of three and seven individuals had participated?

Following lively discussion, solutions to these questions were eventually agreed upon. But of greater importance, in my mind, were the overall skills - encouraged by the expanded application of two quotations - that this assignment demanded of the students:

- how to hypothesize
- how to create an experimental design
- how to make random selections
- how to define variables
- how best to document data (the class decided to use both the times taken for completion and accuracy as criteria - accuracy was determined as the number of correct answers obtained from all individual and group scores expressed separately as a percentage of the total number of correct answers possible - the averages for the collective group and individual scores were also determined - all results were graphed)
- how to compute percentage, and how to complete a bar graph were taught to the younger students - their practical application was reinforced for the older students
- how to determine what constitutes a 'statistically significant' finding

Quotations are a powerful resource through which to suggest topics for debate. For example, Albert Einstein once stated, "Imagination is more important than knowledge, for knowledge is limited, while imagination embraces the entire world." In the hands of an inspirational teacher, this quotation can be turned into a challenge for his students by simply rewording it as a resolution for debate:

Resolved: Imagination is more important than knowledge.

Other examples using the same idea might include:

"Genius must be born, and never can be taught."

- John Dryden (1631-1700)

Resolved: Genius can never be taught.
(one expression in the debate of nature versus nurture)

"Of all those arts in which the wise excel,
Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well."

- John Sheffield

Resolved: Writing is the highest form of artistic expression.

"The only good is knowledge and the only evil is ignorance."

- Socrates (470?-399 B.C.)

Resolved: Ignorance is the only evil.

"There is nothing permanent except change."

- Heraclitus (540-475? B.C.)

Resolved: The only constant in our lives is change.

"The ability to accept responsibility is the measure of the man."

- Roy L. Smith

Resolved: Responsibility is the measure of the man.

"The more I see of man, the more I like dogs."

- Mme. de Stael (1766-1817)

Resolved: Animals make better friends than people.

Quotations give students the opportunity to formulate their own provocative questions. One of the teaching strategies within Frank E. William's model, this technique invites open-ended inquiry as a means for discovering new knowledge. For example, given the anonymous quotation, "Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore.", what questions can the gifted student create to expand his own knowledge?

Some quotations even pose their own provocative question. Centuries ago Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.) considered the following: "What is the use of being kind to a poor man?" But has the question lost its relevance today? Indeed, what intrinsic values are revealed by how it is answered? What would this teach the gifted student about himself?

What fresh insights might a gifted student find in Robert Browning's classic quotation, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp - or what's a heaven for?" What would he make of Al Boliska's humor, "Do you realize if it weren't for

Edison we'd be watching TV by candlelight?" What would he gain from William Lyon Phelps' words, "Those who decide to use leisure as a means of mental development, who love good music, good books, good pictures, good plays, good company, good conversation - what are they?" The opportunities for introspection and revelation are virtually endless.

Paired quotations on a common theme offer a further avenue for gifted students to create provocative questions for personal inquiry. One such example, related to the theme of work, might be:

"People tend to look busiest when they don't know what they are trying to accomplish."

- Michael LeBoeuf

"The key to working smarter is knowing the difference between motion and direction."

- Anonymous

Quotations offer scope for artistic expression. One favourite with students is from Rudyard Kipling's poem *The law of the Jungle*:

"When Pack meets with Pack in the jungle,
and neither will go from the trail,
Lie down till the leaders have spoken-it
may be fair words shall prevail."

A simple open-ended assignment to convey the message contained in these lines in a creative and artistic way often produces wonders. I have seen interpretations presented a number of different ways: dioramas, mobiles, collages, cartoons, bumper stickers, paintings, puppets, film strips - to name the most popular.

But the symbolic nature of a quotation such as this also allows gifted students to look beyond the literal and search for 'deeper' understandings. The message to allow the wise to negotiate before engaging in confrontation, even though expressed by Kipling around the turn of the century, has a very direct meaning for students today given the impact of strike and lockout action in both professional baseball and hockey. The skilful teacher can capitalize on this capacity for quotations to motivate artistic creation combined with symbolic meaning by searching out those that are effective for this purpose. Some examples might include:

"A wise man does not trust all his eggs to one basket."

- Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616)

"A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way."

- Mark Twain (1835-1910)

"Our concern is not how to worship in the catacombs but how to remain human in the skyscrapers."

- Abraham Joshua Heschel

"Education will become recognized as civil defense against media fallout."

- Marshall McLuhan

"Life is rather like a tin of sardines, we're all of us looking for the key."

- Alan Bennett

Quotations make effective 'thought-for-the-day' ideas. Displaying a 'simple' one-line expression stimulates private thought as well as makes a valuable suggestion for activities such as bookmarks and posters. In this regard some ideas might include:

"Laughter is the shortest distance between two people."

- Victor Borge

"A friend is a gift you give yourself."

- Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

"To be loved, be lovable."

- Ovid (43 B.C.-18? A.D.)

"Wonder is the beginning of wisdom."

- Anonymous (Greek Proverb)

"Fortune favors the brave."

- Terence (190-159 B.C.)

Quotations are a viable focus for creative writing. Shakespeare's famous quotation from *Hamlet*:

"This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

is a valuable lesson in itself. But it also allows expanded possibilities in that gifted students can be encouraged to discover Polonius' complete speech to Laertes and rewrite it using a modern form of communication. Rap music, newspaper-style editorials, radio spot commercials are but some examples of students' ideas I have seen that were both very unique and very effective.

The skilful teacher can take this notion one step further and create assignments which demand students include a didactic component governing appropriate conduct in their writing. For example, Hamlet's soliloquy, "To be, or not to be: that is the question. . ." can easily become the focus for

a revised essay beginning with the words, "To smoke, or not to smoke: that is the choice. . ." Likewise, Mark Antony's soliloquy from *Julius Caesar*, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears. . ." contains a similar, but admittedly more difficult, potential.

IN SUMMARY

Quotations in the curriculum, particularly a self-directed curriculum, can be used effectively to encourage a number of possible products as the outcomes of learning. In the foregoing section I have outlined some of these products while suggesting the type of assignment that can give rise to their creation. In short, I believe the skilful teacher can use quotations to foster such enterprises as:

- research assignments
- expository writing assignments
- creative writing assignments
- journal entries to validate or refute intuitions
- experiments
- debates
- creation of provocative questions
- artistic expressions
- 'thought-for-the-day' ideas

I do not pretend for one minute, however, that these constitute the end of possibilities. Indeed, it would be presumptuous of me to imply that my colleagues in the teaching profession were incapable of formulating assignments far superior to any I may suggest. My sole intent is only to 'open the door' to the potential a quotations-based curriculum presents.

CONCLUSION

Today it often seems the trend is to restructure society so its many aspects become paragons of some vague egalitarian ideal. The meaning of democracy has been redefined such that in education the core of equality has come to be regarded not as equal *access* to opportunity, but as equal *outcome* in accomplishment – a utopia believed attainable, but only when a bland consistency among all participants in the educational process has been achieved.

But not to offend the sensitivities of anyone has necessitated the predictable - standards of expectation have degenerated to the lowest common denominator of mediocrity. And the symptoms of this malaise are pervasive. Successful schools are now measured not by the quality of student they turn out, but by the quantity of students they keep in. Teachers eschew excellence and teach to the capacity for achievement that will retain the greatest number of students by guaranteeing most a passing grade. Superior students are either neglected or made to feel apologetic for

achievements that set a standard prohibitive to those less able.

Ironically, attitudes which sustain these effects persist even though contradicted by words of the wise from all time segments of recorded thought:

"The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal."
- Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

"For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away."
- The Bible (Matthew 25:29)

"Understand the truth that although we as individuals are not born with equal physical and mental attributes, we are born with equal rights to feel the excitement and joy in believing that we deserve the very best in life."
- Denis Waitley

As a teacher I see my role as the educational leader at the classroom level. Furthermore, to execute this role requires I be granted the authority to define the results I expect from my students. But this right does not exist in isolation; it demands reciprocal responsibilities. For I clearly abuse my authority, cheat my students, and denigrate my professional integrity if I accept mediocrity as the criterion of acceptable achievement.

In my search to inspire excellence I incorporated quotations as part of a curriculum I created for gifted students. I make no pretense, however, that a quotations-based curriculum is the be-all and end-all of educational reform that will reverse the trend toward mediocrity. It is not.

But quotations do help to inform gifted students about the great ideas of the great thinkers from all cultures and time periods of history. By thinking about, through discussing with others, by writing about these ideas, gifted students not only hone their own reasoning abilities, but are motivated to think the great thoughts that inspire great ideas.

ENDNOTE

For those still frustrated, the answers to the three quotations at the beginning of this article are:

1. Edward George Bulwer-Lytton
2. Sir Henry Bate Dudley
3. Thomas Haynes Bayly

- Ross Butchart

Vancouver, Canada ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

OUTCOMES FOR GIFTED LEARNERS: SELECTIONS FROM NEW BOOK

**BY PATRICIA A. GABRIEL, ANN M. DeYOUNG AND SANDRA K. BAJEMA
JENISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS & GRANDVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MICHIGAN**

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

If your head is swimming with concerns about gifted students, assessments, rubrics, school reform and just getting through the day while meeting the needs of all your students, put on your flippers and join us! We have chosen a swimming metaphor to help show you how you can take the information contained in a well-defined theory and readily adapt it to classroom application. There are some of you who will wish to dive right into the deep end of the pool and others of you who will choose to gain a deeper understanding of the pool rules as you develop your own strokes. Whichever your style and whatever your level of experience in gifted education, we think you will find this book helpful in differentiating curriculum for gifted students.

The purpose of this book is to provide teachers, program coordinators, administrators, and other educators with a comprehensive K-12 gifted curriculum model with which to serve their students. Through this differentiated curriculum, educators will be able to apply the essential concepts provided to develop the maximum potential of their students. A combination of Ward's *Differential Education for the Gifted* theory (DEG) and practical applications for classroom teachers will serve as the focus of the book. The methods presented are only our suggestions for implementing DEG theory. Our hope is that readers will use ideas from this book as well as their own unique perspectives to implement DEG theory within their curriculum.

We also hope that districts will use this book:

- to encourage high standards of excellence for all their students
- as a guideline to maintain rigour in academic pursuits
- to glean concepts from each axiom for classroom instruction
- to assess their efforts involving gifted learners
- to aid curriculum committee work
- to provide guidelines for individual teachers to serve their gifted students

The essential concepts and general principles necessary for curriculum differentiation are included in the Outcomes Framework. Whichever your learning style, whatever your educational experience, we invite you to come on in, the water's fine.

WARD'S DIFFERENTIAL EDUCATION FOR GIFTED (DEG)

Dr. Virgil Ward's DEG is a systematic approach to the differential educational experience for gifted learners. His theory is based upon the behavioral characteristics of the gifted as a whole and upon their future roles. These roles usually involve leadership and creativity in the forefront of the various fields. The principles in DEG pertain to the general education of gifted learners. They are intended to cover the elementary through college years. In this manner, it is intended that practical programs and curricular modifications for the gifted can be made truly appropriate for their needs.

The principles in DEG are the broad basis for a general education for gifted learners. Ward's principles are presented through axioms and corresponding corollaries. They focus upon quality curriculum content rather than upon administrative arrangements (i.e., grouping, acceleration).

Dr. Ward's study began in the early fifties, as his doctoral research. His principles were first published under the title, Educating the Gifted: An Axiomatic Approach (Charles E. Merrill, 1961). The newer version (1980), maintains the original form but with added features.

In his highly elaborate set of principles, Ward delineated the nature of a differentiated and appropriate curriculum for the gifted. Such a curriculum, he argued, deals with theory and abstractions and involves gifted learners in the challenges of intellectual activity. (VanTassel-Baska, 1994).

This section presents an overview of Dr. Ward's principles of curriculum for gifted students and is divided into the following areas:

1. *The Four General Principles (Axioms I-IV) of the Educational Design -*
These four general propositions are considered the umbrella of our framework.
2. *Axioms I-XII with corresponding corollaries -*
The axioms are categorized in the following way:
Axioms I-IV - General Principles
Axioms V-IX - Principles of Intellectual and Academic Development
Axioms X-XII - Principles of Personal, Social, and Character Development

3. *Outcomes for Gifted Learners Framework* - The framework based on Ward's Axioms addresses desired outcomes in today's educational process. Axioms V-XII are used for this purpose. A detailed explanation of this framework is found in Section Three.

Axioms I-IV -- General Principles

The following are the four major propositions which served as the framework for this document. The complete axioms and corollaries of Ward's DEG are listed following the Propositions.

Proposition I:

That the educational program should be based on the nature of the child and on the nature of the role he will assume in the social order of which he is a part;

Proposition II:

That the program must be conceived uniquely with respect to the capacities which characterize the gifted child;

Proposition III:

That the economy should govern the designing of the curriculum in order that an appropriate depth and breadth of learning may be acquired within a reasonable period of the individual's young life; and

Proposition IV:

That teachers of the intellectually gifted should be the most able that can be summoned to the task.

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING GIFTED LEARNERS

Just as a swimmer needs good techniques and stamina to get from the shallow end of the pool to the deep, a gifted learner needs intentional high level curriculum to prevent him/her from simply treading water in the "pool of school." In Section 2, Ward's DEG was introduced, as well as our framework based on his theory. In this section, moving from theory to practice, the focus will be on strategies and methods used to reach the high level, rigorous goals set by the learner outcomes outlined in the framework.

Qualitative Differences in Curriculum

Since a key component to using outcomes is to allow second chances for mastery, so too should it allow extension for the quicker student. When a student finishes his/her regular work with quality, then he/she earns the right to proceed in a manner that uses synthesizing and evaluative skills. It is important to remember that extensions of the curriculum are not repetitions or more of the same. Rather, the regular curriculum and extensions can be compared with completing a beginner swimming lesson class and moving

on to an advanced class for those interested in participating on the swim team. The belief that curriculum for the gifted must be different than the basic curriculum serves as the foundation of Ward's DEG theory. Many use the phrase "qualitatively different" to describe how curriculum for the gifted differs from that of the basic standards. Maker explains,

Modifications must be quality changes rather than quantity, and they must build upon and extend the characteristics (both present and future) that make the children different from the nongifted students. (C.J. Maker, 1982).

Enrichment and Acceleration

Just as it is acceptable to use a swimming pool for water polo as well as diving, both enrichment and acceleration are acceptable as effective extension strategies to use with high ability students. Enrichment usually refers to making additions or modifications to the curriculum in order to make it richer and more varied. Many times an integrated subject approach is useful for enrichment development. Acceleration on the other hand refers to the pace in which the material is presented. Traditionally, acceleration has been especially successful in mathematics. A combination of enrichment and acceleration is an effective way to differentiate for high ability students.

Good educational acceleration is always enriching....and solid enrichment programs always advance the student's learning of new and relevant material and are consequently accelerating. (D.P. Keating, 1979).

Differentiated Pacing

Differentiating the pacing at which the student is allowed to proceed is beneficial to the high ability student, who often brings with him/her a broader experience and/or prior knowledge of a subject. Regular instructional activities may need to be reduced or replaced with more challenging tasks.

Lessons must be paced quickly so that students are always reaching and being challenged by new ideas. Since gifted students can assimilate new ideas rapidly, slowly paced classes soon become classes where the students grow bored and their minds tend to wander. (G.A. Fleming, 1982).

Curriculum compacting (Reis, Burns, Renzulli, 1992) is often an effective strategy to help the teacher make accountable decisions in adjusting curriculum requirements. Those students who show early mastery in a given area of the curriculum are allowed to cover basic outcomes and content in a condensed manner. The time that is saved or earned by the curriculum compacting is used on enrichment or accelerated activities in the student's strength

area.

Basic Curriculum Modifications

Unlike the excellent swimmer, who does benefit greatly from practising and perfecting the same basic techniques over and over again, the gifted student realizes his growth and potential by aspiring for the challenge of the high dive.

Significant outcomes are based upon what all students need for future success and require an underlying or supporting set of knowledge, skills, and competencies. In order to make curriculum significant for gifted learners, it is often necessary to modify the basic curriculum. Maker lists the following areas in which curriculum may be modified:

- Content --What is learned
- Process -- The methods used and the thinking processes students are expected to use
- Learning Environment -- The psychological and physical environment in which the learning is to occur
- Product --The end products expected of children as a result of the processes used

Outcomes for Gifted Learners Framework

Intentional planning is important, as it helps the teacher to identify and document the modifications that will be used with the class or student. This framework gives educators a planning tool for integrating rigorous academic modifications into their curriculum. The strategies in this framework represent components which will help the teacher to facilitate the achievement of the stated outcomes, and as such, lend themselves to programs for gifted learners. It is hoped, however, that the classroom teacher will find most of the suggestions helpful in implementing curriculum for all students. These strategies, many of which are applicable across the curriculum, represent quality learning principles beneficial for the majority of the student population. Renzulli suggests, "We must think about raising the ceiling, as well as the floor." He used the term "high-end learning" (Renzulli, 1994) to challenge and remind educators that adopting higher standards can help a wide spectrum of students to reach their highest level of potential.

The strategies used in the framework refer to general methods with some specific examples of resources based on our experiences in elementary schools. The Strategies column is a list of ideas and suggestions, not absolute methods that must be used. We do not claim this framework to be the definitive answer for curriculum. There are many options for meeting the needs of high ability students. We encourage the reader to explore the various strategies available and to use those appropriate to their particular situation.

How to Use the Framework Template

We have found that it is important not to leave the inclusion of "Outcomes for Gifted Learners" to chance. A template was developed to assist the teacher in intentionally including Ward's Axioms and "Outcomes for Gifted Learners" in lesson plans.

For each of Ward's Axioms and its corresponding Program Outcome, there is a separate template. This enables the teacher to use the format without having to write out the axiom and program outcome each time. A copy of each template can be found in Section 6, ready to be duplicated and used.

The pages following the template key are examples of how teachers used the template to include "Outcomes for Gifted Learners Framework" in their unit plans.

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MULTICULTURALISM AND THE GIFTED STUDENT
BY MICHAEL E. WALTERS NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all/ Ye know on earth, all ye need to know." *Ode on a Grecian Urn* (1819) by John Keats

The term multiculturalism is one of the contemporary buzz words. It's original meaning is two-fold. The first is that the world is composed of various cultures that have all contributed to the advancement and enrichment of the human race. The second is to have students appreciate this truism. However, the term is now used as a political weapon in the arsenal of political correctness. To be multicultural, one does not have to be antagonistic to the cultural productivity of any individual due to the ethnicity, class status or gender of that person. The labelling of great works of art as being essentially the expression of "dead white European males" or "patriarchal" is just as misleading as any so-called cultural elitist approach based upon the innate superiority of a specific group.

Gifted students have as one of their traits a sensibility to beauty no matter where it derives from or how they locate it. The aesthetic is a form of art for art's sake. The primary motivation for the creation of any work of art is the joy of creating the work itself. To achieve this task, the gifted individual needs to possess the tools of a particular craft. A craft is influenced by the flux and fluidity of cultural factors that have been experienced on a personal level. I will briefly describe three gifted individuals from the world of the creative arts as exemplars of the natural multiculturalism of the gifted artist. They are the sculptor Constantin Brancusi, the composer Igor Stravinsky and the writer Ernest Hemingway. These three were chosen because I have recently been involved in cultural programs that emphasized their work.

The art teacher in my school used Brancusi as an example of a great sculptor. Some of her students also encountered his work while touring the Museum of Modern Art. Stravinsky is the subject of this year's Carnegie Hall Children's Concerts (1995). The film of Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea (1952) was recently shown on a local TV station in New York City. Many of my students who viewed this film are now reading the book.

Brancusi left Romania for Paris in 1904. Three years later he worked for the French sculptor, Auguste Rodin (examples of his sculpture are *The Gates of Hell*, *The Kiss*). However, after only a month, he departed to create his own unique visions of sculpturing. His famous reason was, "nothing grows beneath great trees." He lived in Paris during his remaining fifty-three years.

Brancusi synthesized his artistic vision from multicultural patterns of personal influence. First, he was influenced by

the cosmopolitan art community in Paris. Second, he was an avid participant in the galleries and museums there. The major influence on his art was a pre-Socratic sculpture known as Cycladic art from the Greek islands named Cyclades. In the 1920s, the Parisian art world was stimulated by Asian and African art. Many of his early heads represent the Khmer sculptures of Cambodia while his later wooden African sculptures reflect African folk art.

Igor F. Stravinsky is considered by many critics to be either the foremost or among the greatest composers of the 20th century. His range of cultural influences, experiences and productivity is impressive. He was a world traveller mostly because of our century's political turmoil, e.g., the two World Wars. He was born and grew up in Russia but lived in Switzerland, Paris and the United States (Hollywood). In 1910 he wrote the music for an innovative ballet, *The Firebird*, based upon folk tales from his native Russia. In 1913 he composed *The Rite of Spring* which was greatly influenced by his anthropological readings on rites celebrating the rebirth of spring. Throughout his life, he was affected by music from many different cultures. He was profoundly moved by Afro-American jazz and circus music. Stravinsky also demonstrated his multicultural aesthetic by being involved with different art forms that he incorporated into his music. He worked with two of the greatest dancers of our time, Vaslav Nijinsky and George Balanchine. In addition, world renowned artists such as Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso were his associates. His music was interpreted by the mediums of body movement and visual artistry.

Ernest Hemingway was born in middle America (Oak Park, Illinois), outside of Chicago. However, he spent his life being a world traveller, living and writing in places such as Paris, Spain, Italy, Africa and Cuba. The Old Man and the Sea (1952) was the result of a tale told to him by a Cuban fisherman, and the book is written from the viewpoint of an elderly Cuban fisherman. It is a blend of American, Latino and African sensibilities. This is why the Nobel Prize for Literature (1954) was given to him. He wrote in English but expressed universal struggles.

The sensibility of the gifted individual by reason of the creative process itself requires a multicultural perspective. There is not one major artist, composer or writer in any field of creativity who cannot serve as a model for the true concept of multiculturalism. When we learn to appreciate these individuals as part of the creative process, we unlock the cosmos. ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

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There is much concern and confusion today about the future of books and literature in our schools and society because of the increasing role of the computer. Electronic innovations such as word processors, CD-ROM, and the Internet have caused many educators to question whether electronic media will replace the important position of the printed word since the invention of moveable type in 1455. Clearly, this is a valid concern for anyone in gifted education because books have provided the most important personal sources of learning for their students. Through books, they can acquire new information about different cultures, study the history of ideas, stimulate their imaginations to produce new ideas, engage in silent dialogues with great characters from literature, and study the works of outstanding philosophers, thinkers, social critics, biographers, historians and scientists. Many educators and commentators on American society fear that the widespread use of computers in the schools and home will destroy these positive effects.

It is also clear that the computer revolution cannot be stopped. Rapid advances in multimedia programming and the World Wide Web (Internet) are having increasing effects on how children learn in different curriculum areas. The positive benefits of these different modes of learning can be enormous if educators of the gifted take advantage of them. First, many children who do not learn effectively through using books might benefit greatly from multimedia computer programs that teach mathematics, science, logic and reasoning, geography, and history. Such children may be more spatially-pictorially than verbally oriented, and would therefore learn at more rapid rates with a well-designed computer program. These children might also be the largest school population of "hidden" gifted students who need multimedia computer programs to demonstrate their exceptional abilities.

The second important opportunity for learning that computers offer the gifted is their powerful ability to search for and retrieve information from large data bases. Whether engaging in the search for different words on the CD-ROM version of the *Oxford English Dictionary* or using various gopher features of the Internet, highly motivated gifted students have the world of knowledge at their fingertips. Some examples of wonderful information sources we have encountered on the Internet and World Wide Web are: science, history and art displays from national and foreign museums, science education resources, information from NASA about space flights and exploration, discussions of world literature such as Shakespeare's plays,

articles from magazines and newspapers that can be retrieved by selected topics and keywords, and reviews of new computer technology. With the help of knowledgeable teachers who serve as guides through this mass of computer-based information, the gifted student can be challenged to seek, organize and study about many topics not readily accessible in school libraries and homes.

We see another important and crucial advantage of the new multimedia and electronic communications technology as being the atmosphere of personalized learning created by these devices. The feelings of control and independence derived from working computer programs can have strong positive influences on gifted students' attitudes about learning and motivation. Because of the boredom they experience in many regular education classrooms, the multimedia computer programs that concentrate on subjects like dinosaurs, space travel, world/national geography, thinking games, and world/national history can provoke the gifted out of their intellectual malaise resulting from dumbed-down teaching. Indeed, numerous programs can serve as their personal tutor into the world of high-powered enrichment and acceleration.

Of course, there is a downside to the multimedia and Internet revolution such as the large amount of useless junk they can produce, and the enormous amount of time one can waste on worthless programs and bad information. Unfortunately, there are no standards currently available for sorting out this junk. This is why educators must play an important role in helping gifted students to separate the "wheat from the chaff." There is no such thing as Computer Heaven in this world of electronic sight, sound and instantaneous information – at least we haven't found it yet.

This issue includes Judith Wynn Halsted's article on the value of using books to teach gifted children. She is a dedicated supporter of using literature to promote their intellectual and social-emotional development. We have also reviewed her latest book in this issue, *Some Of My Best Friends Are Books* (1994). The article by Adrienne O'Neill and Mary Ann Coe is a comprehensive discussion of the available resources on the Internet. They are educational computer experts who have recently published the book, *Integrating Technology Into The Curriculum* (1995). Michael Walters' essay on the Apollo 13 Mission shows how the movie and related books teach us some very important lessons about giftedness. *M. D. Fisher*

BOOKS: A BASIC GIFTED PROGRAM

BY JUDITH WYNN HALSTED AUTHOR: *SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE BOOKS*
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The literature in the field of gifted education insistently reminds us that twenty years of progress in education for our gifted students is now being reversed (Purcell, 1995). As gifted programs are eliminated, those that remain become more vulnerable, creating uncertainty for parents, teachers, and students. Regardless of the current trend in education, the students identified as gifted for the programs that no longer exist are still in the classroom, and their successors are coming along. Teachers and parents continue to note the characteristics that flag them as gifted and in need of special educational programming. Only the schools' response has changed, often to the detriment of the students (Renzulli and Reis, 1991).

There are other students in our classrooms as well, who may have just barely missed a cut-off point for a gifted program but nevertheless need more challenging work than average learners. These children—not formally identified as gifted but more intellectually curious, enthusiastic learners than average, or displaying unusual artistic or musical talent—they too need educational programming beyond that required by most learners.

Teachers and administrators who are aware of this group of special-needs children and casting about for a low-cost way to meet their needs would do well to return to an educational tool so basic that it is in danger of being overlooked: the book. Good literature, and good discussion of that literature, can go a long way to enrich the educational experience of students whose gifted programming has been eliminated. For teachers who must cut back to a basic gifted program with little or even no funding, and for parents who wish to compensate at home for a lost program at school, this article offers suggestions on how to get started.

Emotional and Intellectual Needs of Gifted Youngsters

With the publication of *Guiding the Gifted Child* (Webb, Meckstroth and Tolan) in 1982, educators of gifted students, until then focused on meeting intellectual needs, turned their attention also to the emotional needs of these children. Many books and articles published since then (Colangelo, 1991; Delisle and Galbraith, 1987; Kerr, 1991; Webb, 1993) examine the emotional development of gifted young people.

By 1985 Dr. James Webb, senior author of *Guiding the Gifted Child*, wanted to develop better ways to discuss emotional issues of growing up gifted directly with the students involved. Learning that I had background in both literature

and gifted education, he suggested a book that would help parents and teachers address emotional needs of gifted youngsters through bibliotherapy—a guide to appropriate books combined with suggestions for productive discussion. The result was *Guiding Gifted Readers* (Halsted, 1988), the first book to deal extensively with bibliotherapy for gifted youngsters. In the second edition, titled *Some of My Best Friends Are Books* (Halsted, 1994), the section on intellectual needs is enlarged to balance the treatment of emotional needs.

The distinction between emotional and intellectual needs is an important factor to consider in forming a plan to use books as the basis for a gifted program. Decisions about the children served, the books selected, and the discussion questions and format used are all based on the first decision: is the goal to promote emotional or intellectual development?

Book discussion designed to promote emotional growth—in this case, to encourage healthy resolution of issues facing gifted children as they mature—is called developmental bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy is often mentioned briefly in a discussion of emotional needs, with the recommendation that the teacher suggest certain titles to students in the hope that they will gain insight into their problems from them. But a book is not a pill; much more planning and involvement are required for true bibliotherapy.

Likewise, bright students are sometimes given a list of titles for summer or college bound reading, in the hope that they will grow intellectually through reading specific books. And probably they will; but much more can be gained if serious discussion follows the reading. In this article we are talking about emotional and intellectual growth for gifted students through programs that are based on books and well-planned discussion.

Whether the goal is emotional or intellectual growth, *books* can be an effective tool in a basic gifted program if they are seen as one leg of a three-legged table. The other two legs are the *student* reader, and an *adult* who reads the book too, and prepares to discuss it with the student. To push the metaphor a little farther, we might call the *discussion* the table-top, that which pulls it all together and makes the whole arrangement useful.

Beyond the Curriculum with Books

Motivation to begin a reading and discussion program might come from a recent article about parents' reaction to

the dilution of gifted classes in Seattle ("Parents Voice," 1995). The article tells of a seventh-grade humanities teacher who met the challenge of a mixed-ability class by replacing *Jane Eyre*, which is popular with gifted readers, with a novel by Gary Paulsen, a good contemporary author whose style is not as demanding as Charlotte Bronte's. The parent or teacher who is glad to have gifted students reading Paulsen but also hopes to introduce them to more challenging literature may want to add a reading/discussion program that reaches beyond the curriculum.

Determining the Purpose

The teacher can begin by examining her goals. Do her students need intellectual challenge? Or does she hope that by reading and talking about books she can help her students prepare emotionally for some of the developmental challenges they face because they are gifted?

Selecting the Students

Setting goals and selecting students are probably intertwined, as the teacher considers the personalities and interests represented in her class. But there is another consideration: the students in this program should be good readers, past the need to develop reading skills and ready to focus on content, on the ideas in the books.

A related issue is the student who is a good but resistant reader—the one who prefers sports or computers to books. Should the program be required, to include such students? Or voluntary, to include only those who love reading?

Finding the Books

Just as surely as the selection of the students involved will be determined by the purpose, the books read will be chosen with the teacher's goals in mind. If her goal is intellectual challenge, she can choose from a wide range of good literature, creating a booklist of her own choosing. Lists of appropriate books are also found in *Some of My Best Friends Are Books* (Halsted, 1994) and in *Books for the Gifted Child* (Baskin and Harris, 1980) and *Books for the Gifted Child, Volume 2* (Hauser and Nelson, 1988).

What makes a book intellectually challenging? The teacher should look at *language* (demanding vocabulary, humor, strong visual imagery); *style* (use of metaphor, allusion); *plot* (complex structure, multi-leveled); and *setting* (varied times and places; not exclusively late-20th-century America).

If he wants to work with the emotional issues of growing up gifted, the teacher must work with a somewhat more focused booklist. He would begin by noticing what issues appear to be relevant for the children in his class. He might

find students who are unwilling to acknowledge their giftedness out of fear of being different; who are making inappropriate decisions about developing their abilities; who are struggling to build friendships; or who are coping with characteristics related to giftedness such as perfectionism, sensitivity, and intensity. *Some of My Best Friends Are Books* (Halsted, 1994) offers suggested titles, as do some books and articles on emotional needs of the gifted. One source is "The Reading Room," a series of columns by Stephanie Tolan that appeared in the newsletter, *Understanding Our Gifted*, for several years.

What characteristics should he seek in a book to promote discussion of emotional issues of growing up gifted? Most important is that the author be able to develop characters with whom students will identify. These characters are often gifted, whether or not they are labeled as such. They are coping with one or more of the issues listed above, or with other questions familiar and compelling to students. And they are credible; that is, the author is skilled at creating believable people who change in response to external or internal events. Finally, the characterization and the plot must have enough depth to sustain a discussion.

Planning the Logistics: Time and Place

Here we encounter one of the advantages of using books for a gifted program: flexibility.

This is especially true of programs designed for intellectual development. Book discussions can occur anywhere: in a corner of a classroom or the library, in an empty room or office, in a car on the way home. For bibliotherapy, however, discussions should take place in a space that ensures privacy.

They can also occur anytime: during reading class, at lunch or recess, before or after school, during an enrichment program—all the usual fragments of time teachers must find in the day to meet individual needs.

The teacher can hold discussions with groups or with individual students. Intellectually-oriented discussions can be led by the classroom teacher, the school or public librarian, a counselor, a volunteer parent, a teacher's aid, or a mentor. Again, bibliotherapy differs: it requires more specialized preparation.

Planning the Discussion

Having settled all of the above questions, the teacher (or other discussion leader) must read the same books the students read and plan discussion questions, keeping in mind the goal.

If the intent is to provide intellectual challenge, the leader

has several choices of discussion format. The Junior Great Books program is one place to begin. Although not designed exclusively for gifted students, it does provide a discussion method that helps students to focus their thinking about what they have read. Any of a number of other discussion methods can be used, modified if necessary to avoid emphasis on fact questions. The discussion leader can usually assume the students have read the book and understand it at least on a surface level, so the focus can be on questions requiring synthesis, analysis, and evaluation.

For emotional issues, the leader attempts to guide the reader through the steps in bibliotherapy: identification, catharsis and insight; that is, identifying with a character, experiencing feelings with the character, and adapting new knowledge to the reader's life. Leading a bibliotherapeutic discussion requires a thorough grounding in the issues gifted youngsters face, awareness of counseling techniques, and readiness to refer to a mental health professional when necessary. It also requires more information on the steps in bibliotherapy than can be given in an overview such as this one. For this additional background, see Hynes and Hynes-Berry (1986) and Halsted (1994).

Most potential book discussion leaders have experience that enables them to envision an intellectually-oriented reading and discussion program with relative ease. Bibliotherapy often needs more explanation. To give a clearer picture of how it can be used with gifted youngsters, some examples follow.

Bibliotherapy: Discussion Samples

Laura Anderson's fourth-grade class includes several gifted children who are having trouble learning how to develop friendships. Knowing that they need both close friendships with others of their ability level, and skills to get along with classmates who do not learn as quickly as they, she develops a reading list: *A Bridge to Terebithia*, *Harriet the Spy*, and *Summer of the Swans*.

In Paterson's *A Bridge to Terebithia*, Jess and Leslie form the rare sort of friendship that parents of gifted children covet for their own sons and daughters. Coming from very different backgrounds, Jess and Leslie recognize something of themselves in each other. They share and foster the courage to be themselves, and although each is so much an individual that they do not fit in their classroom or their neighborhood, they find strength and validation in their friendship.

In discussing this book with her group, Laura asks questions designed to help her students analyze the

elements in Jess and Leslie's friendship—the elements they need to identify and develop in their own close relationships. As they participate in the discussion, they are likely to be silently asking themselves more personal versions of the same questions, exploring how the answers apply to them.

Laura can leave these internal questions unspoken or can bring them into the discussion. Her decision will be based on her knowledge of her students and their ability to benefit from open discussion. Although she may never know how effective her questions are, she is establishing an environment in which introspection can flourish. The students' answers to their internal questions will be informed by the discussion and the responses of other students. For example:

LS: How do Jess and Leslie recognize each other as potential friends?

Student: (How can I recognize potential friends? Am I overlooking a possible good friend?)

LA: What do Jess and Leslie offer to each other to build a friendship?

Student: (What do I offer that might make people want to be my friend?)

Harriet the Spy tells of the prickly Harriet, who does not know how to get along with others and uses her intelligence and independent spirit as a weapon. Eventually her parents and teachers help her to use her powers of observation and her writing ability in positive ways. She comes to realize that she is intelligent—a key step toward dropping the defensive arrogance that some gifted youngsters display.

In this discussion, Laura wants to help her students see that giftedness need not hinder friendship if it is acknowledged and used positively, and that friendship requires skills they can learn.

LA: How does Harriet's intelligence get her into trouble? How can it help her get out of trouble?

Student: (How can I use my intelligence to get me out of trouble instead of into it? To make friends instead of enemies?)

LA: If you were writing a sequel to this book, what would you have Harriet do to make and keep friends, but still be herself?

Student: (What are the steps I can take to make friends without giving up my values?)

LA: When is it all right not to be popular?

Student: (Is it all right not to be popular? How can I choose when to follow the crowd and when not to?)

Unlike the two books discussed above, Betsy Byars' *Summer of the Swans* has no characters who appear to be

gifted. Sara is fiercely protective of her younger brother, Charlie, who has been mentally handicapped since he was three. Sara and her friend Joe are models of empathic and caring behavior when impatience might be expected.

With sensitive guidance, Laura uses the passages that describe Charlie's thinking to lead those who have been ignorant or afraid to a sympathetic understanding of the mentally handicapped. She then attempts to generalize that understanding to a similar tolerance and valuing of all who are not so quick as a sometimes-impatient gifted child. Knowing that some of her gifted students are teased as "brains," she also directs some questions to the feelings behind teasing, and ways of coping with it.

LA: How do the different characters treat Charlie?

Student: (How would I treat someone like Charlie? Would I be kind or impatient? Would I tease?)

LA: How can we understand those who tease?

Student: (If I teased Charlie, why would I do so? How can I understand people who tease me?)

LA: Why and how does Sara help Charlie?

Student: (How could I help him—or someone in a similar situation? Can I be as patient as Sara is?)

Other examples can be given more briefly. For middle school students who are tempted to hide intellectual ability to enhance social standing, a discussion of Katherine Paterson's *Jacob Have I Loved* can focus on identity as a gifted person and the use of high ability: How do Caroline's and Louise's pictures of themselves affect their decisions? What difference does it make in personal happiness and in career choice to know you have a special ability?

Preschoolers who already sense that they are different can draw comfort from Leo Lionni's *Frederick*, the mouse whose friends value him as a poet in the cold of winter, when he recalls the warmth of sunshine with his words. Gifted students in the early elementary grades who have the typical deep concern about moral issues may identify with Harald, a medieval English boy who is awed by the majesty of the great stag and tries to thwart the attempts of the Baron's guests to kill it. Senior high students coping with the unusual levels of intensity that characterize giftedness will find in *Madame Curie* or *Demian* examples of others who share their strong feelings.

Whether the focus is on emotional or intellectual growth, books—accompanied by discussion—can provide a flexible, inexpensive, and extremely rewarding gifted program. For creative teachers and parents who love reading, here is a natural way to provide appropriate opportunities for these special students, even in difficult times. ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞

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USING THE INTERNET: AN ELECTRONIC RESOURCE FOR GIFTED STUDENTS, THEIR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

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In many ways we are all becoming aware that we will be required to enter the twenty-first century with the ability to use new communications and information acquisition skills through the Internet. Today when you take a new job, are oriented as a freshman in college, or exchange telephone numbers with someone, more than likely, you also obtain or exchange your E-Mail number. If you watch television, you have seen the new telephone company advertisements for home and business communications through the Internet. Local newspapers, national newspapers and magazines contain weekly articles about the Internet. Elementary and Secondary school teachers and students are accessing the Internet through their school libraries. Most new jobs result from on-line searches of the Internet and in 1994 Kevin Tanzillo (*COMMUNICATIONS NEWS*) predicted that in the not too distant future, two-thirds of the workers in the United States will telecommute through the Internet from home rather than going to an office each day. Given all of the evidence bombarding us on a daily basis, it is not hard to conclude that we are in the midst of a quiet, non-violent, technological revolution which is rapidly changing the way we live and work. If we don't learn the new skills, it will be very difficult to get a new job or keep the one we have.

While the full potential of the Internet has not yet been realized and a catalogue of the global library would be very helpful, the Internet is a rich source of information and exciting communications opportunities for adults and children (*On Internet '94* [see Endnotes for full details] is the closest thing to a catalogue). Information and communications flow through an interconnected system of 3.2 million host computers (called nodes) linked to 44,000 computer networks in 60 countries.

The present Internet evolved from 1969 to the present. Originally it was funded and run by the federal government, but in April 1995 the federal government exited and the Internet infrastructure is now commercially run by MCI and America Online. Currently it is estimated

that 30 million computers are linking to the Internet. Conservatively it is expected that new users will number 2 million each year, or a 10% increase yearly. Others estimate 100 million users by 1998 and 200 million by the year 2000. (For a time line of Internet developments, see Baran, Nicholas, "The Greatest Show on Earth," *Byte*, July 1995, pp. 69-86.)

As the number of users grows and the commercial vendors increase, it is expected that the services on the Internet will expand. For example, video-conferencing is already possible and as new software for the individual user is developed, use of this feature will become more widespread.

Children are learning to use the Internet as early as preschool in teacher-directed computer classes, but parental supervision is recommended for at home use. Regrettably there are unscrupulous users who wish to draw children into obscene discussions and recent network news stories have told of children being lured into leaving home to meet another user. Consequently, you will want to talk with your child about "safe" on-line practices, caution them never to reveal personal information, and to be certain that all is well, sit with the child as the Internet is used or print out a listing of the on-line activities that were conducted.

If you decide to use the Internet with your children you will find endless sources of information that can be accessed through electronic mail (E-Mail). For example, if your elementary child has a question about science they can get answers from Syracuse University students at apscichs@radford.vak.12ed.edu. Similarly, math questions will be answered at maths@sbu.edu. Using the World Wide Web page entitled, Math and Science Gateway (<http://www.tc.cornell.edu/Edu/MathSciGateway>), grade 9-12 students can do scientific research or obtain help with math problems. The Writing Lab at Purdue University will provide information about correct grammar or usage and will answer questions at owl@sage.cc.purdue.edu.

Students can search for information about two-year, four-year colleges, universities, graduate and professional schools or find job opportunities by using the Web page called Peterson's Education Center at <http://www.petersons.com>.

Using Listservs, students will find information about many subjects. Usually these are programs that distribute messages. Try CHILDLIT@rutvmi.Rutgers.edu for information about children's literature or KIDSPHERE-request@vms.cis.pitt.edu for 10-15 year old global dialogues.

Usenet Newsgroups are discussion forums on a number of subjects. Try k12.chatelementary for general discussions for elementary students, k12.chat.junior for junior high school students and k12.chat.senior for senior high school students. More sites for K-12 students and teachers can be found in Jill Ellsworth's book (see Endnotes for complete citation).

New student projects are beginning all over the world. I*EARN (914-962-5864) connects students in Argentina, South Africa, Russia and many more countries. Recently students worked cooperatively in the Rope Pump project and designed water pumps which they designed and built and sent to villages in Nicaragua. Students in various parts of the United States are using the National Geographic Society's Kids Network to take readings of acid rain levels and compare them using computers and modems. "MayaQuest" was sponsored by Classroom Prodigy and allowed students to vote and chose where and what to explore and study on a bicycle trip in Central America. Many students use the foreign language forum on CompuServe to talk with students in other countries using the language they are studying. The news services on the various commercial on-line access services are being used in classrooms as an alternative for outdated social studies textbooks.

If a student needs information for a research project, the Internet provides endless opportunities by allowing access to many of the libraries in the United States, the Library of Congress as well the data bases of the interconnected computer networks. Tapping the vast information resources of the Smithsonian Institution can be done on-line (sunsite.unc.edu). Information services continue to expand. For example, the University of Michigan has just created The Internet Public Library (<http://ipl.sils.umich.edu/>) on the World-Wide Web. Everyone can use the reference section, children can enjoy a story hour, or parents can leave questions at the reference desk.

Many established colleges and universities are now providing courses through the Internet and new institutions are being created to meet the demand. One example is the American University of Hawaii, founded in 1994, and already serving 1000 qualified students worldwide. While

debates are raging on some college campuses because faculty members object to course credit being given for on-line courses, electronic communication is winning. Many faculty argue that the on-line courses are superior because students communicate more frequently using E-Mail than they did when they sat in lecture halls. The debate is causing the lines between on-line off campus and on campus courses to blur. Consequently, in some on campus courses all assignments and handouts are now distributed on-line and chat groups allow students to communicate regularly with the faculty member teaching the course. Juniors and Seniors in high school can take on-line courses and receive transfer credit when they attend a college. Some adults are using the system to earn degrees without actually attending the college or university.

If you decide to become one of the millions of Internet users, know that accessing the Internet and becoming a proficient user is complicated and takes time. In order to use the Internet you need a computer, a modem, a telephone line, and telecommunications software. If you have the computer hardware and the telephone line, the hardest part of accessing the Internet is deciding what type of telecommunications software to purchase. None of the available software works perfectly for every application, so you will need to choose carefully.

One way to access the Internet is through a local area network (LAN). Before you buy software or join an on-line consumer service, check with your school district and your local library. They may have LAN connections to the Internet and you may be able to obtain information and access from them. If you can't connect your own computer to the Internet using access from their system, you may be able to use their connection on their computers. You may be fortunate enough to live in a community with a FREE-NET (a name for a LAN) which will provide you with access and again, the local library can help you get started.

If you must make your own connection, it is probably wise to begin by reading one of the books mentioned in the Endnotes (Albano, Tin, "Read Only," *PC Magazine*, October 11, 1994 recommended Ed Krol, *THE WHOLE INTERNET USER'S GUIDE & CATALOG* [see Endnotes for complete citation]) as the best choice or to visit your local book store or library for other options. Most of the books about the Internet contain explanations of the simple computer (UNIX) commands you will need to know and listings of sites of information together with the file search capabilities provided by file servers such as ARCHIE, VERONICA, GOPHER, WAIS (WIDE AREA INFORMATION SERVER), or the newest one WWW (WORLD-WIDE WEB) which allows the user to instantly access other documents from a single document, using a hyper-text system. You may choose to access these servers on your own using software applications such as MOSAIC, LYNX OR CELLO.

These programs can be downloaded using the Internet file transfer protocol (FTP) from the Internet for free or purchased commercially. New programs are also available for purchase and include: ACADIA, AIR NFS, CHAMELEON, DISTINCT TOOLS FOR WINDOWS, PATHWAY ACCESS FOR WINDOWS, SUPER TCP/NFS FOR WINDOWS, and WIN GOPHER COMPLETE. Purchasing the programs is expensive and often the novice finds it difficult to learn these programs. New users generally prefer to subscribe to dial-in on-line services.

Using the information in the books will help you decide whether you wish to purchase access to the Internet through on-line dial-in services such as THE PIPELINE (New York City only, 212-267-3636), BIX (800-696-4775), PRODIGY (800-PRODIGY), COMPU SERVE (800-848-8199), AMERICA ONLINE (800-827-6364), DELPHI (800-695-4005), NETCRUISER 1.52 (800-501-8649), INTERNET IN A BOX (800-998-4269), NETRAMP (703-904-4100), or private services which are springing up in all sections of the United States. Charges for these services can vary tremendously. For example, NETCRUISER has a \$25.00 startup fee and a \$19.95 monthly fee, while PRODIGY costs \$9.95 per month and \$2.95 for every hour above the initial five per month included in the fee. WINDOWS 95 is expected to ship in August, 1995 and is promised to contain a feature that will connect you directly to the Internet. While this feature is currently in litigation, it will be interesting to check the service if it becomes available. Therefore, as you read, you need to compare the services by checking what special software is required, the start-up and monthly charges and most importantly, the specifics of the access to the Internet provided by the service. Don't forget to ask about the additional long distance telephone charges that will be incurred as you use the service. For this reason, you may need to select an Internet service that is close to your home or you may re-evaluate your long distance telephone carrier. For example, if you will use the Internet mainly for E-Mail, MCI may be for you. They are currently offering a \$5.00 charge for sending 10 E-Mail messages with no charge if you are a regular customer and no charge for incoming E-Mail messages. In the near future, all of the major long distance carriers are likely to match such offers albeit with different names. For example, AT&T has recently mailed literature to all residential telephone users advertising Home Business Resources for those who wish to work from home and a free subscription to a new magazine called *AT&T Powersource*.

Computer magazines are also helpful to the novice Internet user. (The best magazine description of all that you need to know to connect to and use the Internet is contained in a series of articles in *PC Magazine*, October 11, 1994.) *Online Access*, *Internet World* and the general computer magazines such as *Home PC*, *PC Computing*, *PC World*, *MAC World*, *Home Office Computing*, *Computer Life*, *PC*

Magazine, and *Byte*, all contain useful information. For about \$4.00 you can buy the magazine and often you will receive a free disk to try one of the on-line services. Trying out the consumer services on a free basis may help you decide which one you like, if any. If you cannot find a free disk with a magazine, you may wish to call the services using the 800 numbers listed above and ask them to send you a disk. Or, you could order the July, 1995 issue of *PC Computing CD-Rom* which includes software for every major consumer on-line service and a multi-media tour of the Internet (800-537-4680).

The major on-line dial-in services are constantly expanding their options and those with specific provisions for use by K-12 students are described below. (The dial-in service descriptions were taken from: Coe, M.A. and O'Neill, A., "Using the Internet, Advising Parents," in *INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY INTO THE CURRICULUM*, Simon and Schuster, Boston, Mass. 1995.) --

America Online: Scholastic Inc. is linked to this system, and COMPTON'S ENCYCLOPEDIA and the Smithsonian Institution, Library of Congress, National Geographic Society, CNN, and a Career center provide on-line information. The service includes periodicals such as *TIME*, *ATLANTIC MONTHLY*, *DISNEY ADVENTURES*, *CHICAGO ONLINE*, *SAN JOSE MERCURY CENTER*, *COMPUTE*, *CONSUMER REPORTS*, *THE NEW REPUBLIC*, *WIRED*, *WORTH*, *PC WORLD* and news from Reuters and NPR. In a space called Kool, students can talk about concerns of 6-12 year olds without adult interference (although the system is monitored by adults). There is also a mini-lesson library, a Homework Help area with subject specific sessions, a Teacher Pager for private tutoring, CNN Newsroom for Kids and the Amazing Dr. Science who will answer complex questions about scientific phenomena. A game section is also available and your child can play the games with others connected to the service. More than 50,000 free software programs can be transferred to your computer and on-line access to the Internet is provided.

CompuServe: This service includes extensive shareware (free software) for students, a Student Forum, and resources such as *AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY*, *GROLIER'S ACADEMIC AMERICAN ENCYCLOPEDIA*, *TIME MAGAZINE* and news from the AP wire. Your child can play games with others connected to this service.

Prodigy: This service is even useful for pre-schoolers and has the most reasonable subscriber rates because advertisements are included. There is a *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC* area, a *SESAME STREET* Play area, an educational bulletin board (*ASK BETH*), a chat area (*JUST KIDS*), and homework help specific to Elementary and Junior High School Students. *GROLIER'S ACADEMIC AMERICAN ENCYCLOPEDIA* and *DR. KNOW-IT-ALL'S INNER*

BODY VOYAGE are available. Additionally, Reuters, AP and UPI provide news stories.

Eworld: Available only to Macintosh Users, provides games and chat areas as well as GROLIER'S ACADEMIC AMERICAN ENCYCLOPEDIA, free access to the Internet, a news and sports service and for parents, a forum and access to EXCEPTIONAL PARENT MAGAZINE.

Genie: A computer Assisted Learning Center (CALC) allows the child to post homework questions by subject. There is also a service for having a discussion with a teacher in a specific subject area.

As you use the Internet, you will find sites with interesting information. You will want to record these places and how you got there because it is often difficult to find them again. Eventually you will have your own Internet directory tailored to your particular needs and tastes.

Joining the world of Internet users will provide you with many opportunities, but you will also need to be very careful. In 1988 a "worm" invaded computers connected to the network and while the problem was corrected within 72 hours and response teams were immediately created to solve future problems, security of the total Internet is still a major concern. Security is also a problem for the individual user. Some of the programs that are free on the Internet have been contaminated with viruses which spread to other programs on your computer when you download programs or information from the Internet to your computer. Also, you must be very careful about the security of the information on your computer when you go on-line. Hackers are often able to tap into computers and change or export data from computers that are connected to the Internet. Therefore, sometimes using the Internet can cause you tremendous headaches. However, the advantages of using the Internet still outweigh the disadvantages. Good luck to you as you begin to "surf the net." ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

ENDNOTES

Further information about the Internet can be found by reading the following:

Badged, Tom and Sandler, Corey, WELCOME TO...INTERNET: FROM MYSTERY TO MASTERY, MIS Press, 1993. \$19.95.

Dern, Daniel, THE INTERNET GUIDE FOR NEW USERS, McGraw-Hill, 1994,\$27.95.

Ellsworth, Jill H. EDUCATION ON THE INTERNET, A HANDS-ON BOOK OF IDEAS, RESOURCES, PROJECTS AND ADVICE, Sams Publishing, 1994. \$25.00.

Engst, Adam C. INTERNET STARTER KIT FOR MACINTOSH, Hayden, 1993. \$29.95.

Engst, Adam C, Low, Corin S. and Simon, Micael, A. INTERNET STARTER KIT FOR WINDOWS, Hayden Books, 1994, \$29.95.

Estrada, Susan, CONNECTING TO THE INTERNET, O'Reilly & Associates. 1993. \$29.95.

Graffin, Adam, EVERYBODY'S GUIDE TO THE INTERNET, ELECTRONIC FRONTIER FOUNDATION, 1994. \$14.95.

Hahn, Harley, Stout, Rick THE INTERNET COMPLETE REFERENCE. Osbourne McGraw Hill. 1994. \$29.95.

Kent, Peter, THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO THE INTERNET, Alpha Books, 1994, \$19.95.

Krol, Ed. THE WHOLE INTERNET USER'S GUIDE AND CATALOG, SECOND EDITION, O'Reilly & Associates, 1994, \$24.95.

Marine, April; Kirkpatrick, Susan; Neou, Vivian; Ward, Carol. INTERNET: GETTING STARTED. PTR Prentice Hall. 1994. \$28.00.

ON INTERNET'94, Meckler-media. 1994. \$45.00.

Randall, Neil, TEACH YOURSELF THE INTERNET, Sams Publishing, 1994, \$19.95.

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**APOLLO 13: A SPACE MISSION IN GIFTEDNESS BY MICHAEL E. WALTERS
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"Hope is the thing with feathers,/That perches in the soul,/And sings the tune without the words,/And never stops at all."
Emily Dickinson, "Hope," in *Poems*, 1891.

The success of the film *Apollo 13* (1995) is encouraging to those in the field of gifted education. What the nation is being exposed to is a community of gifted individuals working together. For far too long, the American public has taken the space program for granted and perceived this venture as just being for technocrats. However, in this cinema version of the events of April 1970, we witness the humanization of technology – astronauts and the Mission Control staff do not just manipulate buttons, computers and assorted gadgets. Instead, they demonstrate the human being interacting with technology in a highly intelligent manner. This faulty space mission demanded the best of human responses since there were continuous life-threatening problems that needed to be solved. In this respect, we can characterize the human being as a problem solver who is very adaptable to changing situations.

The movie enables us to see the astronauts in a more holistic perspective. Besides their physical prowess, we also see that they are intellectually gifted as well. They must be able to use knowledge instantaneously because speed of response is a necessary criterion for survival in space missions. Moreover, the entire crew of the Houston Spacecraft Center includes gifted individuals. As you watch this film, the concept of giftedness cannot be avoided. For example, the episode during which there was an immediate need to design an air filter that would enable the astronauts to breathe is an epiphany to giftedness. A dozen or so individuals at Mission Control, on the spot, in the most demanding situation, jointly designed this filter. What was also obvious was the ability of all of these gifted individuals to stay calm in tension filled conditions. The audience leaves the theatre with the inner feeling that humanity has hope through its demonstrations of giftedness – the hope that whatever type of difficulty the human race may find itself in, it can identify the means to adapt and eventually overcome the problem through using gifted attributes.

The book that the movie was based on, *Lost Moon* (1994), has been reissued as *Apollo 13* (1995). It too has become very popular. This book is so well-written that despite the fact that the majority of recent readers have probably seen the movie first, they will still experience the adventure of this space mission from the written account. Jim Lovell and his coauthor, Jeffrey Kluger, have written a space age saga. As you read it, you feel like an astronaut, particularly on a psychological level, and you experience what it was like to be Jim Lovell and his crew on that fateful journey into space. Both the book and the film enable you to understand the gifted sensibilities of these high technology knights in space suits.

The interest in *Apollo 13* has stimulated readers to seek other similar topics. One of these is James Michener's *Space* (1982). He wrote this novel about the space program over ten years ago but the tone is contemporary. Michener had the genius to understand what the space program meant to the United States as a cultural force, and he was able to express this comprehension in fiction. He perceived this program not as an opportunity to beat our rivals at that time, the Soviet Union, but as the expression of our national psyche and consciousness. President John F. Kennedy described the race to the moon as a national objective to achieve excellence. This is what Michener captures so well in his novel – the community of gifted individuals expressing their sense of excellence. The space program is about establishing giftedness and excellence in the American soul. Americans today see the Apollo 13 mission as making a distinction between excellence and perfection. Excellence goes beyond perfection and achieves humanity and hope by striving for a better world and improved human conditions. Apollo 13 serves as a role model for us all.

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BOOK REVIEWS from *GIFTED EDUCATION NEWS-PAGE*

Some Of My Best Friends Are Books: Guiding Gifted Readers from Pre-School to High School by Judith Wynn Halsted (1994). Ohio Psychology Press: Dayton, OH.

This is a comprehensive guide on the importance of books in the lives and education of gifted and intellectually curious students. Besides providing extensive information on how books can be used to foster their emotional and intellectual development, Halsted gives the reader useful background information on the history of current issues in gifted education. Chapter 1 on emotional development discusses some of the functions fulfilled by books in establishing an identity, needing time alone, developing relationships with others, and learning how to use one's ability. Chapter 2 on intellectual development covers many characteristics of giftedness in the verbal and reasoning areas that show these children have strong needs for rigorous reading experiences in both the school and home. These themes are expanded in Part Two (Chapters 3-5) on the reading process where the author first discusses the role parents should take in guiding their gifted children's reading from the early years through senior high school. In this regard, parents need to use different educational strategies when working with avid or resistant or mature readers (Chapter 3). Halsted then talks about how books can be used to assist in the emotional and intellectual development of gifted children (Chapters 4 and 5). The highlights of these chapters are: (1) in-depth analysis of the advantages of bibliotherapy and detailed demonstrations of its use with the gifted; (2) a discussion of techniques for using books to promote intellectual growth; and (3) what parents can do to stimulate this growth by means of books.

The third and last part (Chapters 6-8) concentrates on the core of an effective reading program. It presents detailed information on selecting challenging books from all areas (Chapters 6 and 7) – fiction, nonfiction, biography, traditional literature, fantasy and science fiction, and poetry – and lists some excellent books about children's literature. Chapter 8 includes an annotated bibliography of hundreds of recommended books for the preschool through senior high school levels. Each book is briefly summarized and assigned discussion categories that emphasize its major features for gifted children. In addition, the author includes many relevant questions related to such categories as achievement, aloneness, arrogance, creativity, drive to understand, moral concerns and perfectionism.

It is important that teachers, parents and librarians carefully study and apply the ideas discussed in **Some Of My Best Friends Are Books**. For the future of books in American society and the education of our most advanced students, Halsted's ideas should be ingrained into every teacher's imagination.

The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate Of Reading In An Electronic Age by Sven Birkerts (1995). Faber and Faber: New York.

For anyone concerned with the future of literature and of books in the 21st century, we highly recommend this series of essays. Birkerts has accomplished a difficult task by doing an insightful analysis of how the reading process affects and interacts with the reader, the writer and American culture. In addition, his discussion of the history of literature in our society clearly shows how television, the computer, CD-ROM, hypertext, and the Internet have caused the culture of reading to decline. He has demonstrated the importance of reading in American society, and has shown how this decline will cause revolutionary changes in our culture and thinking. His dire predictions about the future of reading and literature may not come true since there are many indications that reading is making a comeback as a result of the increase in large, well-stocked and pleasant bookstores, and the expansion of high quality literature in such areas as mysteries and biographies. Although these occurrences appear to contradict the concerns discussed in **The Gutenberg Elegies**, the author provides some of the best statements about how reading affects the human mind that we have ever encountered. They are certainly more insightful than most of the reading research reports from university schools of education.

The first half of Birkerts' book concentrates on his study of the reading process. These seven chapters are based upon his own experiences as a writer for *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Atlantic*, *Harper's* and *The New Republic*. He addresses such topics as the reading sensibility ("What is the place of reading, and the reading sensibility in our culture as it has become?"), the reactions of today's college freshmen to literature, the gains and losses produced by the electronic age, the author's development as a reader and writer, the movement from intensive to extensive reading, the nature of the reading process, the relationship between sensibility and reading, the impact of reading on the psyche, and the interaction between the reader and the writer. Regarding the book world, he says: "The transition from the world we live in to the world of the book is complex and gradual. We do not open to the first page and find ourselves instantly transported from our surroundings and concerns. What happens is a gradual immersion, an exchange in which we hand over our groundedness in the here and now in order to take up our new groundedness in the elsewhere of the book. The more fully we can accomplish this, the more truly we can be said to be reading. . . ." (p. 81).

This book is a symbolic wrestling match between the author and the concepts of literature, reading and the book. His essays provide deep insights into these elusive topics. We believe that Birkerts has won this match through his systematic analysis of every important aspect of reading and the reader. As a resource for gifted students, teachers and parents, it can help them understand the importance of reading in Western society. It is full of relevant observations and phrases such as, "Indeed, the state I occupy while reading often feels more focused, more meaningful, more *real*, than those that comprise most of my nonreading life. . . ." And it contains numerous questions that provoke thinking about the impact of reading on one's life. Some of these are: "How *does* a reading memory differ from the memory of an actual event?" "Reading and writing -- reader and writer. Could it be that at some level the two activities are not all that different, that they are just modifications of the ebb and flow of our awareness, ways we have of breaking down and recombining the countless interlocking puzzle pieces inside?" (pp. 107, 113).

The second part of The Gutenberg Elegies stresses the idea that we are at a crossroads in American culture as a result of the information and electronics revolutions. The author discusses such books as Lionel Trilling's The Liberal Imagination (1950) and Alvin Kernan's The Death of Literature (1990) to reinforce this point. Although he downgrades the sense of immediacy produced by these revolutions at the cost of reflective reading and thinking, we see a challenge for gifted children and their educational experiences to produce a meaningful solution by combining the best features of the book and electronic media. After all, who will solve the problems discussed by Birkerts if not gifted individuals.

Being Digital by Nicholas Negroponte (1995). Alfred A. Knopf: New York.

The author is a guru of the computer-information age -- a Professor of Media Technology at MIT and Founding Director of the MIT Media Lab, a world-class consultant to international corporations, universities and governments, and a nationally known essayist for *Wired* magazine. Interestingly, he says at the beginning of the first chapter that he is dyslexic and does not like to read. Regardless of his learning style and media orientation, he has written important and nontechnical essays (many were originally published in *Wired*) on the history and future of our electronic age. For example, the reader will learn that fiber optic networks will usher in an age of even greater choices for selecting communications media, television shows, and computer programs than currently available. Negroponte is definitely a futurist -- but he is different from most crystal ball gazers because his predictions are based on his, and his colleagues' and graduate students' solid work in multimedia television and computer electronics.

Negroponte emphasizes that the industrial ages of steel and auto manufacturing -- involving the exchange of atoms -- are quickly being replaced by the transmission and compression of bits. These high speed, electronic on-off signals determine communications received from most electronic media. In the present age of bits and bytes, it is not the picture quality of digital television that is important for television manufacturers; rather the *bandwidth* for communicating these pictures should be their major consideration. As the author shows, televisions designed to receive the higher bandwidths via cable, telephone or satellite will open a new world of interactive and viewer-selected programming. This world will consist of more personalized TV programming by means of thousands of channels worldwide. A computerized selector will choose programs based on viewers' preferences and store them for future viewing. Computers will also become more personalized if Negroponte's predictions come true. As an example, they will be sensitive to the behavior and work habits of their owners, have radically different video displays that will be able to follow a person around a room, and allow computer-human interactions via voice simulations. If these electronic predictions actually occur -- and there is no reason to expect otherwise -- our telephones, televisions and computers might become more humane by being able to adjust to human quirks and needs. This increased sensitivity of electronic devices could expand the horizons of all groups in American society including the gifted, disabled and minorities.

This book also contains discussions of why the FAX machine is a step backwards for high technology, the advantages of using the Internet to communicate around the world, the contradictions of virtual reality, and Seymour Papert's work at MIT in teaching children how to use computers to think and solve problems. Negroponte is a master at showing how the digital age will influence human lives because he has been closely involved with computer developments for the last thirty years. He does not deny that there will be a dark side to this age through "digital vandalism, software piracy, and data thievery." Even more serious, he believes we will witness many job losses caused by automated technology. But he remains optimistic when he states: "Bits are not edible; in that they cannot stop hunger. Computers are not moral; they cannot resolve complex issues like the rights to life and to death. But being digital, nevertheless, does give much cause for optimism. Like a force of nature, the digital age cannot be denied or stopped. It has four very powerful qualities that will result in its ultimate triumph: decentralizing, globalizing, harmonizing, and empowering." (pp. 228-29). Hold on to your keyboards -- you ain't seen nothin' yet!



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