

WorldTalentWeb

Newsletter of the World Giftedness Center



2020 WORLD GIFTEDNESS CENTER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2020 World Giftedness Center International Conference aims to bring together leading researchers, scholars, educators and practitioners from around the world to exchange and share their research findings, ongoing research activities and experience about gifted and talented education.

This conference is organized with the intention to provide delegates with an exceptional platform to discuss new trends, recent innovations, initiatives and challenges within the area of gifted and talented education. The invited speakers and/or researchers will present and share knowledge, ideas and recent experience in identifying, monitoring and nurturing the gifts and talents of younger and older students. The WGC Conference also aims to foster

international cooperation and find diverse partners to establish future cooperation. During the conference, the newly established World Giftedness Center (WGC) will be officially launched as an initiative by Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation for Distinguished Academic Performance. This Center aims to advance gifted and talented education and provide support to different countries all over the world. It seeks to trigger a worldwide effort to help individuals enhance excellence. This prestigious conference is scheduled to be held from **November 2 to 5, 2020 at the 2020 EXPO Dubai Convention Center**. The conference targets a diverse audience including researchers, practitioners, teachers, educators, university students and counsellors from all around the globe.

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WorldTalentWeb Editorial



Penina Barry & Jennie Quinn
Education Officers, SCS Australia

A very warm welcome to the second edition of the WorldTalentWeb Newsletter. Once again it is our great pleasure to showcase the incredible work being undertaken in the field of Gifted Education by academics, teachers and parent advocates alike from around the world. In this edition, we take a closer look at underserved populations and minority groups, including the culturally and linguistically diverse and the economically disadvantaged. We also look at the creative ways communities of parents and academics rise to the challenges created by systems that fail to recognise or support giftedness at local and national levels.

Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius and Worrell (2011, p.22) state that "...although there are several theories explaining the disparity in achievement in our society that contribute to the underrepresentation of low-income and minority students in gifted education, these issues are manifested in unique and different ways that have been understudied and need further attention

from scholars." The authors contained in this edition have certainly made it their mission to shine a spotlight on these underserved students. By sharing their stories with us, these scholars are bringing well-deserved attention to the important issue of equity for our gifted minority students.

In our first article, we travel to Peru where Dr Sheyla Blumen, Professor of Psychology at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP), takes us on a journey that unpacks how over the last two decades, vital work has been carried out in Peru to improve understandings about talent development within diverse ethnic-linguistic contexts. Dr Blumen draws our attention to the idea that; "Inequities in the selection processes of students living under highly vulnerable conditions due to their social-economic status or ethnic-linguistic background, prevent those children and youths from attending gifted programs." Dr Blumen outlines how a path has been forged to "keep dynamic nationwide identification strategies available, which aim to make visible rural and ethnic-linguistic diverse minorities." She sees this as an ethical imperative to promote equality in fostering talents beyond cultural backgrounds.

Recent research in the United States has been aimed at closing the gap between achievement and excellence for underrepresented gifted minority groups, Olszewski-Kubilius and Steenbergen-Hu (2017) and Siegle, Gubbins, O'Rourke, Langley, Mun, Luria, Little, McCoach, Knupp, Callahan and Plucker (2016) have noted large excellence gaps at top levels of achievement for low-income

children, minority students and second language learners and that the gaps are present early, continue to grow and are broadening. Olszewski-Kubilius and Steenbergen-Hu's (2017) work on Project Excite recognizes that building a support system for students' psychological, academic and social-emotional development involves concerted actions to connect with their families, teachers, schools, and communities.

Our next author, Martina Rosenboom of Germany, examines the benefits of this support system in a completely different and somewhat unique context. Martina is president of the German Association for the Gifted Child (DGhK), a nationwide, non-profit association that promotes the needs of gifted children by working with parents, teachers, psychologists and other interested persons. The DGhK was established in 1978, due to the necessity for parents to advocate for their gifted children in an environment that held only a few special schools in music, sports, maths and science projects etc. Apart from this, nothing else existed at that time for gifted students because of the perception that their giftedness was meant to be guaranteed success. In her article, Martina explores how the DGhK association has provided information, counselling and networking designed to improve outcomes for gifted students for over 40 years.

The final author, Dr Gillian Eriksson from the University of Central Florida, takes us to South Africa where "For over 20 years, South African education has sought to dismantle an unjust Apartheid education system and ensure access, equity and rights for all through a Constitution that affirms non-discrimination."

Within this context of infusing African background histories, cultures, languages and

perspectives, gifted education has been seen as elitist and exclusionary and as a consequence, there are no mandates, certification or training for educators. Dr Eriksson's article explores research into past and current approaches that have resulted in a focus on those who are unrecognized for their unique abilities and underserved, particularly identifying and serving diverse High Ability learners from impoverished and marginalized contexts. Important work is taking place and Dr Eriksson shares this through a showcase of the Faculty Study and Teaching Abroad Program developed in response and themed: ***Find, Engage, Challenge and Elevate Advanced, Talented and Highly Able Learners.***

We hope you enjoy the articles as much as we did and feel inspired by the creativity, dedication and desire of these champions to enact equity, inclusion and the pursuit of excellence for our underserved gifted minority groups.

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GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN IN PERU: EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS OF ECONOMIC STRATA AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY



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Abstract

Existing discrepancies in academic accomplishment among the gifted and talented students around the world show that students coming from culturally/linguistic diverse contexts are often unnoticed for gifted programs. Inequities on the selection processes of students living under highly vulnerable conditions due to their social-economic status or ethnic-linguistic background, prevent those children and youths from attending gifted programs.

Peru managed to organize 25 state-funded high schools for the high performers, to provide educational interventions to those students living under extreme poverty conditions, mostly attending rural schools. Although this is not enough, the path is traced to keep dynamic nationwide identification strategies available, which aim to make visible rural and ethnic-linguistic diverse minorities.

This is an ethical imperative to promote equality in fostering talents beyond cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, it constitutes a concrete action that will allow under-represented students' access to better educational and developmental opportunities, towards social justice.

Keywords: high ability, gifted children, talent development, indigenous gifted, Peru

Peru, a South American ethnic-linguistic diverse country was successful in lowering inflation, improving macroeconomic stability, as well as reducing the external debt, with improvements in development indicators (World Bank, 2016). However, it still shows 19.7% poverty in the rural population.



The road towards a school in the outskirts of Lima city

Low-income jobs and the absence of benefits for basic health care lead the financially challenged to be living under highly vulnerable conditions (World Bank, 2016). Furthermore, the population growth and the overcrowding of the cities affects the social welfare system. Limitations that may impact some gifted students' hidden status from access to gifted programs involve the following conditions: (a) belonging to low-income families; (b) living in poverty in ethnic-linguistic diverse collectives; or (c) exhibiting a less studied particular condition of giftedness, such as twice exceptionality or underachievement.



Jicamarca school, 23 km from downtown Lima City



The bell of Jicamarca school

Until the beginning of this century, giftedness was related to general intelligence (g) (MINEDU, 2006). However, since the educational reforms of 1972, the law of special education supports programs to promote the creative performance inside regular classrooms. In 2009, a meritocratic-based public policy was installed and educational accommodations to foster academic talent were established (Blumen, 2016a). Conventional models of talent tended to focus on personality traits (Ziegler et al., 2013).

But there was a need for models that emphasize the dynamic interaction of the person with the environment in order to have a better understanding of the processes related to high achievement under poverty conditions. Furthermore, the lack of culturally fitted foundations for establishing provisions for talent development in Peru hindered the development of policies that were related to talent identification services in the community for more than a decade (Blumen, 2013b).

Personality characteristics of intellectually talented youths coming from low-income households were described in a study using the Rorschach Psych diagnostic test (Blumen & Cornejo, 2006) with the following characteristics: (a) tendency to approach situations from their personal reflections; (b) sophisticated emotional resources; (c) high levels of initiative and creativity; (d) tendency for perfectionism; (e) need to control situations; (f) unconventionality; (g) high levels of sensibility; (h) oppositeness; as well as (i) being insightful. They also exhibited characteristics expected in poverty contexts, such as cautiousness and low levels of self-confidence, high levels of stress, and alertness toward the environment, as well as a tendency towards having depression.

“NOWADAYS, 25 COARS [COLEGIO DE ALTO RENDIMIENTO (SCHOOL FOR HIGH ACHIEVEMENT)] ARE SERVING 6,700 9TH- TO 11TH-GRADE HIGH ACHIEVING ETHNIC-LINGUISTIC DIVERSE STUDENTS COMING FROM LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS BELOW THE POVERTY LINE IN EVERY PERUVIAN REGION”



An enrichment program inside the regular classroom

Provisions for the Gifted and Talented in Peru

Modern provisions for the highly able in Peru emerged under the cooperation of Future Minds Gifted Centre, CREA Talentum Research Group of the PUCP, and Radboud University (Wechsler, Blumen, & Bendelman, 2017). In May 1997, an experimental teacher workshop was launched, sponsored by the Ministry of Education and the German Cooperation Agency for Education, as the first documented effort to train regular public-school teachers to meet the needs of gifted students in the regular classroom: it benefitted 100 teachers of 3000 children (Blumen, 2013b, 2016b). Positive outcomes of the workshop lead to its broader application on a national basis as a relevant course in Peruvian teacher training programs.

Between 1997 and 1998, several international academic and professional events were organized, committed to informing policy-makers, mental health and education officers, social workers, teachers and parents, about the needs of the highly able. During 1998, a dynamic schedule related to the identification of and provision for the highly able in Lima City was organized, and in January 1999, the European Advanced Diploma in Educating the Gifted sponsored by the European Council for High Ability, trained 40 teachers, 60% from public schools, and 20% from rural schools.

By the end of the 1990's teachers were trained in gifted education (Blumen, 2013b). Creative enrichment programs for the highly able children who attended public schools were launched in primary state-run schools (Blumen, 2013a), with ability-grouping becoming a common enrichment provision for Grades 1–5 (Blumen, 2001).

Other resources, such as universities, research institutions, museums and other professional organizations, became committed to the support of talent development as well (Blumen, 2013b, 2016b). Moreover, enrichment activities related to chess clubs, Model UN debates, drama, music classes, and mathematics-and science-related clubs were also available at mixed-funded, and private-funded schools (Alencar, Blumen, & Colleague, 2000; Blumen, 2013b). Furthermore, private schools offered the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, as well as a variety of enrichment programs in science and technology. Students also participated in the various talent search programs sponsored by universities, such as the Peruvian Math Olympic competitions, science fairs, inventors' fairs, and mathematics competitions, among others. Also, they participated in international events, building-up an important network among their international peers.



Young scholars on their bootcamp

Additionally, for mathematically talented students, the use of talent search testing and associated provisions in secondary schools has grown rapidly over the past decade (Blumen, 2013b, 2016b). Therefore, tailor-fitted counselling programs were developed for the members of the Olympic team, based on cognitive processing therapy (Blumen, 2016a). Improvement, as measured by the positions achieved at the International Math Olympiads (IMO), showed that social-emotional support was important as a significant variable in any team-work.



Math talented young scholars in the adaptation week

Following an 8th Grade Talent search, students at state-run schools were provided fellowships to attend a residential Academy launched in 2010 to serve the talented youths coming from disadvantaged and poverty contexts (Blumen, 2016b). The first school was developed as a pilot study. Nowadays, 25 COARs [Colegio de Alto Rendimiento (School for High Achievement)] are serving 6,700 9th- to 11th-grade high achieving ethnic-linguistic diverse students coming from low-income households below the poverty line in every Peruvian region. This initiative constitutes an example of a promising attempt with results that will be worth monitoring in the near future (Wechsler, Blumen, & Bendelman, 2017).

Their mission is to collaborate internationally and provide high standard educational services for talented students in regular classrooms nationwide, which allows them to consolidate their personal, academic, artistic, and sporting competences (Ambrose, Sriraman, & Cross, 2013; Sternberg, 2016). Their vision is to become an academic, organizational, and management referent of an educational model that contributes to improve state-run public education as the foundation for national development, to form a community of positive leaders able to promote local, regional, national, and global development (Sisk, 2016).

The COAR staff members are selected among professionals of education, psychology, social sciences, humanities, and pure sciences. To become part of the COAR, staff professionals follow a tailor-fitted training program in the COAR educational service model and need to become certified by the International Baccalaureate Organization as IBO teachers. English teachers also need international and Blended Learning certificates.

The training program's study plan involves lectures for 60 hours per week, with compulsory subjects and elective workshops, such as robotics, oratory, dance, music, painting, and the like, as well as other after-school activities. Ten hours of English per week are needed to reach level B2 in mastering English as a second language (MINEDU, 2016).



Young scholars from the COARs

Selected students in the 8th grade Talent Search program enter COAR at the beginning of the 9th grade and are placed in the Learning Strengthening Program to consolidate previous learning. Particular attention is placed on adaptation skills to overcome the changes in family life. In 10th grade, students start the IB Diploma program and special attention is placed on the consolidation of social-emotional and leadership competencies. The 11th grade, which is the last year of regular schooling in Peru, is focused on the development of their personal life project to support their vocational orientation and planning for their future.

Moreover, in the COARs there are an articulated number of programs and resources in order to guarantee the psycho-pedagogical

conditions to smooth the integral development of the students. A 24-hour service of psychologists provides monitoring through tutoring, vocational orientation, the promotion of intercultural democratic co-existence, residential monitoring, and social service, as well as participating in learning circles and after-school opportunities. Parents also assume their responsibilities of keeping a healthy family environment.

Talent development in college of education

Provisions for academically talented students in college (or university) studies is beginning to be considered in Peru and different models of mentoring programs are being developed for high-achieving students attending college (Blumen, 2013b). From the cultural relational theory perspective, the literature suggests that the academic relationship established between college students and their mentors may constitute a creative and enriching learning space for students, as well as a regenerative opportunity for professors or mentors (Blumen, 2013b). Moreover, mentors seem to play an important role in the talent development process with college students and high achievement is the result of the dynamic process, which involves the given opportunity (Erwin & Worrell, 2012).

Beca 18 Program— a fellowship—covering all required expenses for intellectually talented youth from low socio-economic backgrounds, to enable them to continue college studies in either Peruvian or international universities. Every year, 2000 fellowships by merit are available for the high achievers who are living in poverty or extreme poverty conditions, to continue college education (Pronabec, 2018).

Unresolved issues concerning talent development in Peru are related to the need for: (a) a comprehensive paradigm to meet the needs of the highly able (Blumen, 2013a); (b) a legal framework to smooth academic acceleration and early entrance to universities; (c) training in gifted education to be part of every teacher education program; (d) advocacy in the media to support the needs of the highly able (Blumen, 2013a); and (e) prescribed policies in terms of potential cost-effectiveness, based on research. Moreover, there is the need for a theoretical framework that considers ethnic-linguistic and poverty variables in the study of the highly able. It may incorporate biological, social, and individual variables in any identification process. Furthermore, there is the need to provide incentives to enterprises that foster domain-specific talents nationwide (Blumen, 2016b).

The following are the most difficult issues that need to be addressed: (a) any definition about talent development is likely to include environmental factors (Cummings & Blatherwick, 2017); (b) the importance of nutrition in school achievement and its relation to the development of basic cognitive processes; (c) the relevance of prior schooling and its relation to intelligence test performance (Blumen, 2013b, 2016a); and (d) theoretical foundations that support the identification process, with goals established around the pedagogical demands and the theoretical constructs that support an effective learning process (Blumen, 2013a, 2016).

Final Comments

Even though Peru has made progress in the field of gifted education in the past few decades, there are still many recommendations to follow:

(a) the promotion of comparative research about the beliefs and conceptions on the highly able between the different ethnic-linguistic groups is desirable; (b) it is imperative to study culture-fitted provisions for the talented students coming from ethnic-linguistic diverse societies to offer them advanced placement classes, through a self-selection process; (c) gifted education content should be included in the pedagogical formation of curricula; (d) acceleration should be permitted in the national educational policies of Peru; and (e) home-schooling programs for the gifted need to be developed to provide intervention programs in rural areas, where multi-graded schools still prevail.

Finally, it is necessary to improve our understanding about talent development within ethnic-linguistic diversity contexts. Broader policies of talent development are needed, with the commitment of parents, teachers, and the students themselves, with the support of educational institutes, and the officials of education, in order to support talent development with social responsibility.



Future Minds Gifted Centre team

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WHAT ABOUT THE PARENTS? 40 YEARS OF COUNSELLING IN GERMANY



Author:

Martina Rosenboom, President of the DGhK (2015-2019)

(Deutsche Gesellschaft für das hochbegabte Kind - German Association for Gifted Children)

It was a great honor for me to receive the invitation to present the work of our association in Dubai as one of five outstanding advocacy groups worldwide.

As current president of the DGhK (Deutsche Gesellschaft für das hochbegabte Kind - German Association for Gifted Children) I was standing for forty years of experience in counselling parents, publishing magazines and books, and building networks all over Germany and beyond.

1. Development of the DGhK

In the 1970s, gifted education in West Germany meant special schools (sports, ballet, music) or competitions (music, sports, science projects). Apart from this, nothing seemed to be useful because giftedness was meant to be guaranteed success.

Special schools also existed in Eastern Germany (music, maths, sports, circus artists) and classes in a foreign language in primary school (Russian). Apart from that, giftedness did not exist as a topic.

The “Deutsche Gesellschaft für das hochbegabte Kind” was founded on the initiative of Ms. Annette Heinbokel in 1978 in Hamburg (West Germany). Made by experts to support parents, it was modelled on and first supported by NAGC, UK (today: PotentialPlus). Starting with regional work in the city where Annette Heinbokel was working, it took ten years to come up with activities in regional groups in all big cities in West Germany.

From the beginning, the small group was publishing a magazine called the Labyrinth. In 1978 there were eight pages, size A5, twice a year and made by private carbon copy. In 2019 we have 48 pages, size A4, three times a year in professional 4-colour print – but still edited by members in voluntary work! Of course there is also a website at www.dghk.de with additional information.

The regional groups grew to fourteen regional branches, each of them also a friendly society with their own homepage, their own board and budget, and with their own counsellors. The nationwide network is connected to international networks like ECHA/ETSN, WCGTC and HELP. Infact, the DGhK has more than 3000 members, mostly families (each paying 75€ p.a., schools paying 30€ p.a., incl. free magazine). Still, there is no financial support by any government (only support by foundations in particular fields). The association is providing information, counselling and networking.

2.Counselling families/parents

Counselling contact is mainly made by the website, mail and phone; a nationwide search engine helps users to get in contact with the next counsellor. Direct contact to regional and local counsellors is also possible and frequently used. The counselling may be via one-to-one conversations and at group meetings as well. Due to the requests it is mainly focussed on family situations, personal development of gifted children and interactions with institutions. Many of the counsellors have special experience and expertise (i.e. as ECHA-Specialist in Coaching the Gifted). In addition, many of the regional branches offer further training - sometimes optional, sometimes mandatory – to keep an eye on the knowledge of the counsellors.

The counsellors are providing information (knowledge, Labyrinth, books), individual support (focussed on capacity building) and also networking (links, other parents, external experts).

Together with our counsellors and based on their experience, the DGhK published a small book. Parents were informed about basics of giftedness and three main fields: family life, personality development and dealing with institutions. “Alltag mit hochbegabten Kindern – Ein Wegweiser” (Everyday Life with a Gifted Child – a Signpost) was published in 2017 with 80 pages and distributed i.e. as a gift for new members.

3.Counselling schools/teachers

The association is also providing information, help and networking contacts for schools and teachers. Counselling contact is usually made by mail and phone, via our website or via direct contact to regional specialists. They are counselling through one-to-one-conversations and at seminars. All of these counsellors have pedagogical background, experience and

many of them, formal certificates (i.e. ECHA-Certificate or ECHA-Diploma). They are providing information (counsellors knowledge, Labyrinth, books, teaching material, concepts and methods), individual support (regarding a single student or situation) and also networking (institutional networks/projects, external experts, i.e. contact to ECHA-degree-holder).

To reach this group of professionals, presentations on national and international stages are used, i.e. national educational talks (Münster 2012, 2018) or our own congress in 2018, or international conferences like ECHA-conferences (Salzburg, Dublin). The DGhK is also contributing at regional and national fairs like the Didacta. For this we edited additional material, like posters, thematic papers or our explainer (video, trailer at https://dghk.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Download_Didacta2015-Explainer-2_cut-1.mp4)

4.Additional Public Support and Connecting

Generally the association is talking to everyone interested in the field of supporting gifted children. So the DGhK is also working with interested psychologists/scientists, talking to and working with politicians, publishing books and doing Public Relations. This is mainly the practical part.

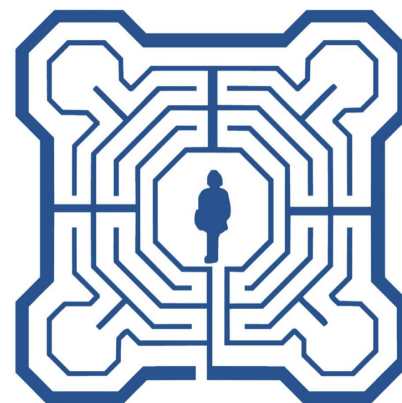
On the other hand, we support theoretical work by starting and keeping collaborations with scientists or national institutions at fairs, conferences and via the Labyrinth. The scientific board consists of several scientists, mainly from pedagogy but also from psychology. Their contribution supports the evidence-based approach.

The DGhK counselling is not only giving help but also making the parents look over the rim of their teacup:

- Parents and teachers/schools need to talk about the different situations at home and at school, focussed on the development of HLP children (not just “excellent students”).
- Parents and politicians need to talk about structural requirements and ongoing processes to improve social life (not just “individual solutions”).
- Parents and scientists have to work together for giving/getting more empirical data and publications (not just in scientific papers).

So in the end the association is working to empower parents to stand for, not only their child, but gifted children as a group. For many parents this leads to becoming an active member of the DGhK, organising events, becoming a counsellor, and/or working in the regional or national board.

The DGhK has a lot of staying power. As long as parents in Germany are looking for counselling regarding their gifted children, the DGhK is working for them.



“THE DGhK COUNSELLING IS NOT ONLY GIVING HELP BUT ALSO MAKING THE PARENTS LOOK OVER THE RIM OF THEIR TEACUP”



SMALL STEPS TO THE STARS: ADVOCATING FOR HIGH ABILITY AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE PROJECT.



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**“THE MOST REVEREND SOUTH
AFRICAN BISHOP DESMOND TUTU
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For over 20 years, South African education has sought to dismantle an unjust Apartheid education system and ensure access, equity and rights for all through a Constitution that affirms non-discrimination. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2011) identified inclusivity through differentiation as an aim of the South African curriculum. Despite this policy, gifted education has been neglected and currently there are no mandates, certification nor required training. A postcolonial approach has evolved that emboldened student protests and initiated the process of undoing colonial practices and perspectives in curriculum. This transformative approach demands that what students learn is related to whose knowledge is the focus and the ways of knowing from diverse African perspectives. The African background histories, cultures, languages and perspectives are infused in the curriculum, as assessment practices become more fair and valid from an African context. Within this context, the concept of "gifted" has been viewed as discriminatory, elitist, separatist and non-democratic, and exclusionary.

As in any country in transition, a range of opinions exists about gifted education, and despite the rejection of a discrete label, both teachers and parents have continued to focus on the academic and personal needs of students with high abilities. Before initiating this project, qualitative research was conducted with a review of data around past and current



approaches, interviews and observations in a range of educational settings, schools and universities. This indicated a great need for knowledge about high abilities and how best to challenge their academic, social and emotional development within a context of reframing and transforming South African education. The greatest need was to focus on those who are unrecognized for their unique abilities and underserved, particularly identifying and serving diverse High Ability learners from impoverished and marginalized contexts. A bridge to new technologies infused into authentic, indigenous and virtual environments represented an additional level of interest.

Faculty Study and Teaching Abroad Program.

This international initiative included American educators travelling to South Africa who are experts in the field of Gifted Education, Research, Educational Psychology, Curriculum and Instruction, Teaching for Social Justice, New Technologies and Comparative and International. The core team, hosted by the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Studies (JIAS) included: Dr. C. Hopp and Dr. A. Blackwood (University of Central Florida); Dr. R. McAnallen (University of Connecticut); Dr. K. Chandler (University of Virginia and Essex County, VA); Prof. A. Jotia (University of Botswana) and M. Dimkatso (Central University of Technology).

University of Johannesburg - South African Institute on High Ability and Talent Development - October 3-6, 2018

As the Director and coordinator of this Institute, I collaborated with UJ Prof. J. Perumal (International Programs Director) and Prof. T. B. Diale (Educational Psychology) to develop 4 days of training, workshops and professional development for

teachers, principals and administrators. The local planning team included UJ Faculty, two school Principals, educational consultants in creativity and languages, and key speakers from the University of Pretoria and Botswana. Two of these days were off campus or at local schools (workshops for teachers) and two days on campus. The first day included a colloquium, by Dr. A. J. Onwuegbuzie, Sam Houston State University, Texas. (*"Mixed Methods Approaches for Conducting Research on Impoverished Children with Promise, Talent, and High Ability"*). This was a very successful program with around 90 participants, in addition to the 31 sessions/presenters. Gauteng Province administrators, teachers and educators attended, including participants from Kenya, Botswana and Nigeria.

The Program Theme: Find, Engage, Challenge and Elevate Advanced, Talented and Highly Able Learners.

The Objectives of the program were: Nurturing creative and academic talent from all populations and socio-economic levels. Symposia at schools included the topics: Advanced Differentiation; Underachievement; STEM Challenge; Challenging Thinking; Socio-emotional Issues. Pre-institute workshops included: developing Action Research projects (Action Projects); Developing dynamic enrichment for advanced differentiation (Passion Projects); Creative Teaching in Math and Science (STEM projects); Addressing the socio-emotional needs of diverse high-ability learners (Perspective Projects).

The Institute started with the keynote speaker, Dr. J. Maree who addressed the theme, describing his work with children in crisis and their high potential, and was followed by 20 sessions.

Presentations according to Strands included:

- **ELEVATING:** Advocacy and Research for Advanced, High-Ability and Gifted Learners in Southern Africa
- **ADVANCING CONTENT** through critical thinking and problem-solving in areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Humanities
- **ENGAGING HIGH-END LEARNERS** by supporting their SOCIO-EMOTIONAL affective needs and twice-exceptional learners
- **EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE** - Reaching High Ability Second Language Learners; Marginalized; Impoverished
- **CREATIVITY** integrating the Arts, Media, New technologies in teaching and learning

Key Outcomes

The dynamic engagement between the academics and teachers in a wide range of contexts has fostered a renewal of serving high ability learners in South Africa, and showed the great need for dissemination of knowledge and strategies relevant to curriculum. The challenge is how to infuse this with an authentic post-colonial approach that affirms the rights of each child to be educated both in relation to their high abilities and talents and to infuse their African roots and perspectives in an evolving education system. This has had a significant impact on focusing on how to meet the needs of high ability learners in South Africa. These are small steps, showing the need for collaborative international partnerships to be established and extended and to provide professional development so needed to teachers in the field. This proved to be a very meaningful and enriching experience as these participants were keen to form and continue this type of collaborative partnership in the future.

The Most Reverend South African Bishop Desmond Tutu has affirmed the urgent need to identify and develop the gifts and talents of those who are precocious to "reach for the stars" in the spirit of "Ubuntu" (Maree, 2007). It is inspiring to know that in the statement issued by the South African National Development Plan 2030, it states: "We respect ability, competence and talent." This Plan concludes with the statement showing the need for creative productivity: "We acknowledge that each and every one of us is intimately and inextricably of this earth with its beauty and life-giving sources; that our lives on earth are both enriched and complicated by what we have contributed to its condition." (NDP, 2030, Executive Summary, 2019, p.11)

- The results of this project were presented at the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children World Conference, in Nashville, TN in July 2019 entitled: Issues Impacting Inclusive Education for Highly Able Students in South Africa: Renewed Advocacy Efforts - Eriksson, G.I.; Chandler, K; Dimkatso, M.
- At the National Association for Gifted Children Annual Convention, in Albuquerque in November 2019 the project was presented: Reaching Marginalized Gifted learners; engagement through Professional Development of Teachers. Eriksson, G.I.; Chandler, K.; McAnallen, R.

References

Maree, K. (2007). A reflective conversation with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. *Gifted Education International*, 23(2), 188-192.
National Development Plan 2030 (2019) Executive Summary: Our Future, Make it Work. South African Government Commission, 2019, p.11.

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