

WORLDTALENTWEB NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the World Giftedness Center



WORLD GIFTEDNESS CENTER

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WorldTalentWeb Editorial



Penina Barry & Jennie Quinn
Education Officers, SCS Australia

The 'Big Picture' in a Gifted World

Jennie and I have the great privilege of visiting a number of schools across our system in Sydney, Australia. One of the greatest professional joys in our role is attending school events that celebrate the incredible work of their gifted and talented students.

We attended a school symposium at the end of 2019 in a co-educational K-10 setting which runs a comprehensively integrated gifted program that extends and enriches their gifted students. The school is situated in a challenging socio-economic area and the majority of students use English as an additional language and/or dialect. What we experienced will remain as a very powerful memory to remind us each day of why it is vital to advocate for gifted

and talented students so they become integral members of a progressive society that contribute to the diverse fabric of our dynamic world.

A young man in Year 1 we will name as 'Toby' caught our attention in the college hall; a beaming smile with missing teeth and a stand that could challenge any local museum display. Toby's smile grew wider when he saw we were headed his way. He was giving his carefully constructed display one final adjustment when we arrived - and then the show began. Toby passionately performed for us an incredibly animated presentation on the evolution of fire and how humankind has been impacted by this beneficial and destructive phenomenon over the ages - all without notes, prompts or guides. His extensive and deliberately chosen vocabulary impressed us so much, we found ourselves adding some of his words to our own list of under-utilised adjectives. Then came the finale.

Toby articulated through a stubborn lisp, how Australia could reduce the chances of experiencing devastating bushfires while making simple links to research on climate change - and there you have it. A sneak-peek of Toby's life as an eminent scientist helping the world solve complex environmental problems. Greta Thunberg would have been proud as a 'veteran' of the cause. What a privilege. He may well become the world's greatest salesman too - either way, he will certainly go places. Toby may get there faster than would generally be expected because he is currently in a school that readily identifies gifted students and provides regular and authentic opportunities for children, like himself, to practice their talent.

Thinking back, for someone so young to be sharing with us his thoughts about what issues are currently shaping our future and ways society can create a more sustainable future, it was quite a moving encounter, particularly with the unprecedented bushfire disasters that occurred across Australia in recent months.

The generous authors of this WorldTalentWeb edition have touched on the same themes expressed by Toby, yet they have done so while existing in various other parts of the globe. Jose Torres shares the extraordinary stories of some of his past students at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA). IMSA's mission is "to ignite and nurture creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition", (imsa.edu, 2019), so the experiences of these students will captivate your imagination. Jing He will share her stories from Beijing Number 8 High School where quality gifted education classes and other intellectually stimulating opportunities are benefiting gifted students to foster high aspirations and distinctly special talents. Lianne Hoogeveen shares how vital it is for teachers and counsellors of the gifted to support and care for students who are facing a future that relies on global partnerships to tackle current issues of the world. Lianne outlines professional learning offered by Radboud International Training on High Ability (RITHA) that builds expertise for teachers and counsellors in the area of social and emotional needs to support the gifted. Finally, Tina Harlow shares

her insights around what has caused the rise of gifted students in a challenging world where positive change is necessary for the benefit of humanity. She also offers ways we can continue supporting them in this era of pivotal transition.

Toby could easily be a gifted child in any of the above-mentioned scenarios and that is the beauty of this collaborative publication. Talent development is a global endeavour and with advocates such as yourselves who choose to deliver and share best practices in gifted pedagogy, students just like Toby, who may experience challenging obstacles in their formative years at school, may overcome these barriers and become the eminent human beings we will rely on to build a more humane and sustainable future. Let's find more like young Toby and be unequivocally moved into action in both the classroom and the world.

Many thanks to our authors this month. We hope you enjoy this edition of the 'big picture in a gifted world' as much as we enjoyed sharing Toby's story.

Warmest regards,
Penina & Jennie

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DESIGNING CONDITIONS FOR TALENTED STUDENTS TO BE CREATIVE, ETHICAL, AND SCIENTIFICALLY MINDED



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Abstract

In this article, I describe three exponential technologies affecting our present and future world and make the case for how these advances in technology require new skills that go beyond content knowledge, such as creativity, ethics, and scientific thinking. Following the brief description of exponential technologies, I paint a vivid picture of three former students of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) who can serve as icons for how we can nurture the next generation of creative, ethical, and scientifically minded persons. Through these individual vignettes, I describe

how IMSA creates the conditions to nurture the most important skills and predispositions necessary now and in the future.

How do we prepare our young people for a world of exponential change and exponential technologies; a world not too far in the future? The first exponential technology that I discuss is **autonomous or self-driving vehicles**. According to ALEC-American Legislative Exchange Council (<https://www.alec.org>), already 28 states in the USA have considered 98 bills related to the general topic of autonomous vehicle. Self-driving vehicles pick up and drop off persons in several cities in the USA, such as Boston, Pittsburgh, and Phoenix. This exponential technology will not only disrupt jobs (truck and taxi drivers), but it will also have implications for car insurance, car ownership, and if, or when, people will get their driver's licenses.

A second exponential technology is **additive manufacturing, or 3-D printing**. The evolution of desktop printing has been rapid. From dot matrix printers (and for some of us older folks, no printers at all), to faster printers culminating in laser printers, all of us have become publishers. The impact that laser printers has had on self-publishing will be child's play compared to the impact that additive manufacturing will have as 3D printing becomes as ubiquitous as laser printing. Additive manufacturing technology is now being used creatively to make everything from jewelry to fashion to aerospace. In fact, dentures, bones and even human organs and body parts, such as limbs and vascular systems are being created with 3D bioprinting techniques.

Today, 3D printing advances are already achieving remarkable things. How much more disruptive will this exponential technology be 10, 20, 50 years from now? In October of last year, a 20-year old woman, Penelope Heller, was fitted with a custom, 3D-printed sternum and rib cage at the NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center. She suffered from a rare bone cancer (Billups, 2018).

What if every person on the planet, no matter their country, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation had a powerful 3D printer that could print: clothes, food, currency/money, body parts, weapons? What are the ethical implications of 3D printing?

The last exponential technology that I mention is **artificial intelligence or AI**. AI will challenge our ethical systems now and in the future. In 2016, Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook founder, built his own version of an advanced AI. He called it "Jarvis" to run "my home and help me with my work" (Terdiman, 2016).

Have you heard of the AI robot that passed a college entrance examination? The Todai Robot was able to write a 600-word essay on maritime trade in the 17th century that was good enough to meet college entrance criteria. Noriko Arai, AI expert and member of the team that built the robot, explains in her TED Talk that this wasn't because it possesses intelligence, but rather because it recognizes key words. "Our robot took the sentences from the textbooks and Wikipedia, combined them together, and optimized it to produce an essay without understanding a thing," Arai says (TED). What Todai Robot cannot do is discover,

create, find meaning, think ethically.

What knowledge do we teach our students in a world where Google knows everything? What skills do we teach our youngsters given our future world; I would argue our present world?

What do our children need to learn now for a future that is exciting, frightening, and unpredictable? The answers to these questions lie in our educational settings that create the conditions to advance problem solving, creativity, and ethical thinking among young persons.

These are the very conditions we have created at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA). Next, I hope to paint a picture of three persons who can serve as icons of how the conditions we created at IMSA helped them to become creative, ethical, and scientifically minded.

The Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) was founded over 30 years ago as a pioneering community designed to serve academically talented students with an interest and passion for mathematics and science by serving as a learning laboratory in the state of Illinois. Our mission is to ignite and nurture creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition. We pursue our mission in two ways: by serving 10th through 12th grade Illinois students through a residential academy that offers inquiry based education and college-level courses, and by providing professional development through curricular and outreach programs to educators and students. We also have focused on entrepreneurship and innovation, and makerspace education to

increase the tech talent in the Chicago region. Last year in 2018, IMSA was rated #1 as the best public high school in the USA by Niche.com. This year in 2019, we were rated the #2 school.

While IMSA has over 6,500 alumni, I want to describe three of them to illustrate the conditions we create at IMSA to nurture creative, ethical, scientific minds. As you meet these three and consider how we can nurture the next generation of creative, ethical, and scientifically minded persons, keep in mind Eric Hoffer's assertion, "In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists."

Terez Ivy grew up in East St. Louis, Illinois, a city marked by poverty, violence, and lack of educational opportunities. As you read the words written by Terez Ivy, ask yourself, "who daydreams like this?" (Marshall, et.al., 2011). *"I daydream of speeding through unknown galaxies to discover planets unknown. I travel to the ends of the universe, observing its simple yet beautiful extravagancies... I master the beautiful and delicate intricacies of time*



Terez Ivy

and space. I explore the most intriguing and mystifying forms of a star, a 'Blackhole'... becoming the greatest scientist there ever was."

That question again, "Who daydreams like this?" Terez does.

Terez wrote these words on his admissions application to IMSA when he was 13 years old.

He daydreamed and spent his time designing anything that could fly. He was a young freshman when he applied to IMSA seeking experiences that would propel him higher academically and satiate his curiosity. When I last spoke to Terez, he said that going to IMSA was the coolest period of his life. He also said, "I'm presently surrounded by technocrats and successful people in Washington, DC, but the smartest people I've ever been around were at IMSA, and that includes the faculty and staff."

Terez learned how to think—not to just "spit back" the facts, but to develop self-confidence in offering his opinions to others. He also thought it was a tremendous opportunity to listen to the late Dr. Carl Sagan, a writer and scientist, during a special event of the IMSA Great Minds Program.

The residential aspect of IMSA, having a roommate, eating, sleeping, and learning with residents whose home was in Chicago, Carbondale, Naperville, Kankakee had a huge impact on Terez. IMSA's diversity, challenging classes, and academic supports molded Terez and opened his mind to possibilities heretofore not conceived.

Terez serves as an example of a *creative*, ethical, scientific individual. He demonstrates some of the most important skills and predispositions necessary now and in the future:

- Divergent Thinking
- Complex problem solving--critical thinking
- Creative thinking

Our next icon of a creative, ethical, and scientifically minded person is Lynn Sosa (Marshall, et.al., 2011). Lynn's first application to IMSA was rejected. However, she applied again after attending additional summer programs. Lynn was finally admitted. Prior to coming to IMSA, Lynn was a student at a magnet school in the Chicago Public Schools, where she developed a deep interest in all types of sciences. Attending IMSA's summer programs motivated Lynn all the more to seek and gain admission to IMSA's regular academic programs. Attending magnet schools in Chicago entailed leaving

her neighborhood to travel across the city to participate in classrooms with similarly motivated students. Attending IMSA, on the other hand, meant living and learning with students from all over the state, yet, participating in much more than merely academics. At IMSA, Lynn could play, eat, and sleep with talented students who were now neighbors in her wing, residential hall, and in the next building. At IMSA, it was cool to be a geek!

At IMSA, she loved the array of science classes citing Microbiology as most influential. During our conversation, Lynn said that her most important lesson, which followed her to Loyola University and then Harvard Medical School was this—"Know what you know; know what you don't know, and know who to ask when you don't know." Lynn's early experiences in minds-on science, lab work, and field studies were most impactful. She said the IMSA classes in which she was most successful required self-directed learning and self-reliance. The array of classes she took at IMSA, such as Pathogenic Microbiology ignited and nurtured a desire to learn more about infectious diseases.

After attending Harvard Medical School, Lynn gained a fellowship at the Connecticut Department of Health, where she now works. Lynn continues to be motivated by a desire to make the world better. At IMSA, we call this fulfilling our mission statement "to ignite and nurture creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition."



Lynn Sosa

Today, Lynn is the director for the Tuberculosis and Sexually Transmitted Diseases Program at the Connecticut Department of Public Health and is also the Connecticut Deputy State Epidemiologist. Lynn's division also handles: immunizations, foodborne outbreaks and special situations like their Ebola response activities. Lynn credits IMSA with preparing her in how to learn.

Our final icon is Sabrina Gonzalez Pasterski. Sabrina is another icon of a creative, ethical, and scientifically minded person. Sabrina is known as the "Physics Girl" and is an IMSA 2010 graduate. The opportunity to take flight lessons when she was nine helped spark her interest in science. By the time Sabrina was 13, she had learned how to fly a plane, built her own aircraft, and flown it solo. At 14, Sabrina flew a plane, whose single-engine plane she rebuilt, across Lake Michigan. In response to her increasing number of achievements, her IMSA mathematics professor, Dr. Micah Fogel would ask her, "What have you done lately?"

Since graduating from IMSA, her academic career has similarly taken flight. She originally dreamed of building space crafts and working for an aerospace company. But when she started interning for Boeing Phantom Works and NASA's Kennedy Space Center while she was a student at MIT, she realized she'd rather learn more about the physics behind flight. She earned an undergraduate physics degree from MIT in three years with a perfect GPA. She was also the first

woman to graduate at the top of her undergraduate MIT physics program in 50 years and is now a Ph.D. candidate in physics at Harvard's Center for the Fundamental Laws of Nature.

Sabrina is studying the nature of gravity and space-time—essentially working to clarify our understanding of how the universe operates. She has been recognized in 2015 by Forbes as "the next Einstein" and "30 under 30" by Scientific American in 2012. In 2016, Stephen Hawking cited her 2015 paper on electromagnetic memory and was said to follow her work.



Sabrina Gonzalez Pasterski

Our philosophy at IMSA coined by our founder, Dr. Leon Lederman, who won the Nobel Prize in Physics for his discovery of the muon neutrinos serves as an exclamation point to end this article. Lederman had a key role in the discoveries that broadened the understanding of subatomic particles that are considered the building blocks of the universe mainly discovering two subatomic particles — a neutrino and quark — which greatly enhanced scientists' knowledge of the composition of matter.

He said,
If we do what we know and feel is right,
it is bound to happen that among our
graduates there will be numbered
scientists, engineers, and those who go
on to earn degrees in law and letters.
There are likely to be those few who
create new intellectual worlds, cure a
dreaded human ailment or in some other
way significantly influence life on our
planet. Our philosophy will be to treat
our charges as if each one is capable of
this extraordinary achievement. Only
one such product will make the effort
and expense of this school for its entire
duration worthwhile.

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GIFTED EDUCATION AT BEIJING NO. 8 HIGH SCHOOL

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Established in 1921, Beijing No. 8 High School is a time-honored school with fine traditions and rigorous school spirit in Beijing, China.

In 1985, it set about to explore nurturing strategies for gifted students by launching an accelerated experimental class (hereinafter referred to as the “gifted class”). In 2010, it established the enriched experimental class for the development of comprehensive quality of highly intelligent students (hereinafter

referred to as the “quality class”). In 2014, the innovative center of gifted education was founded in Beijing No. 8 High School including the above two models.

In order to cultivate talents for the development of the country and address the “hunger” of highly intelligent students at the stage of basic education, the mission and goal of our gifted education is to develop students into excellent graduates with “high aspirations, comprehensive quality, solid foundation and distinctly special talents.”

Since it was kicked off in 1985, students of 21 gifted classes and 3 quality classes have graduated. Currently, there are 8 gifted classes and 12 quality classes with a total of 602 students on campus. Over the past 34 years, the School has created many “number ones” in China, making a unique contribution in exploring gifted education with Chinese characteristics. Both the gifted class and the quality class enroll highly intelligent children around 10 years old with the academic level of Grade 4 students.

The gifted class adopts the accelerated model and the quality class adopts the enriched model. Students of the gifted class spend 5 years studying the 8-year curriculum (the fifth and sixth year of primary school, 3 years of junior high school and 3 years of senior high school) before taking the national college entrance examination. Students of the quality class spend 7 years studying the 8-year curriculum (the fifth and sixth year of primary school, 3 years of junior high school and 3 years of

senior high school) before taking the national college entrance examination.

After years of practice and exploration, a viable scheme is established to select and identify gifted children. According to the research of domestic and foreign scholars on the intelligence factor, non-intelligence factor and creativity of gifted children, and in line with the principle set forth by Professor Zha Zixiu of the Institute of Psychology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences – multiple channels, multiple approaches and comprehensive evaluation, we have designed an effective identification method by comparing the results taken with multiple test instruments, taking the intersection and carrying out comprehensive evaluation to avoid the interference of advanced learning and special training for more accurate identification.

Our selection process consists of preliminary screening, secondary screening and probation to probe into the 3 aspects of a student's quality, i.e. congenital qualities, current academic performance and ability, and future development potential, and eliminate the impact of cultural background from the identification of natural functions of the brain.



In recent years, we have continuously improved and optimized the screening process, especially in the preliminary screening of 2019, we developed an online screening system for gifted children, making full use of the advantages of the network and adopting the online screening method, effectively screening at a large scale. Teachers of the gifted and quality classes have accumulated rich experience in teaching highly intelligent students in accordance with their aptitude through unremitting reform and exploration, thus creating opportunities for the comprehensive development of highly intelligent students and exploring a new approach to the early cultivation of top-notch innovative talents in China. For the gifted class, scientifically integrated and flexible curriculum provisioning, highly-efficient and reasonable curriculum implementation, customized teaching, unique PEN (Physical Education in Nature), and diversified social practice programs, have helped students to save much time by reducing repeated exercise and exams.

Due to the three characteristics, i.e. young age, short time and high requirements, teachers of the accelerated gifted class integrate the teaching materials in reference to the criteria of high school curriculum in two ways. Firstly, they integrate the same knowledge of different phases. For instance, the knowledge on dynamics, optics, thermology and electricity from junior high school and senior high school physics is integrated. Secondly, a spiral teaching method is adopted for progressive teaching of different

disciplines. Take math for example. At the initial stage, knowledge bridging primary school and junior high school is taught. Then, knowledge of the junior and senior high schools is taught and practised in a progressive manner until it is well mastered by the students.

While integrating the knowledge of different disciplines, we also pay attention to inter-discipline coordination. For instance, teaching of mathematical knowledge required for physics is scheduled before the teaching of physics. In addition to integrating the teaching materials, scientific and efficient teaching methods are adopted to increase the teaching efficiency. The teaching process is well designed to inspire the learning enthusiasm of students and protect their strong thirst for knowledge.

In addition to normal physical education, every week, students spend a whole afternoon on a wide range of sports

activities in nature, including hiking, mountain climbing, diving, skating, unicycle riding and bicycle riding. Teachers not only provide physical training for students, and give full play to the natural environment and humane factors for educational purposes so that the course can take advantage of the natural environment and sports activities for the comprehensive improvement of students. Diversified social practice can not only broaden the vision of students, enhance their independence and team spirit, but also help them better learn about society and increase their social adaptability and responsibility. Taking Class 21 of the gifted class as an example, it organized 17 different social practice programs that lasted 77 days at home and abroad.

For the quality class, four types of “enhancement curriculum” are set up. In terms of education on humanity and society, selective reading of Chinese classics, funny logics, philosophy, economics and science of law are provided for the students. Also, two comprehensive courses are designed, i.e. a comprehensive liberal arts course – history and society, and a comprehensive science course – basics of natural science. Students of the quality class gather for research based learning for one week each semester on projects they have co-determined with their teachers. They also spend one week on off-campus social practice.

Teachers of the quality class pay much attention to cultivating the thinking ability of students, inspiring and maintaining their learning interest. They



encourage students to adopt active learning strategies with their own learning styles. Teachers respect students as cognitive subjects, helping them build their own knowledge systems. The teaching of the quality class is carried out around three parts, i.e. what, why and what more. “What” provides the students with a cognitive basis, “why” and “what more” spark their curiosity and desire to explore, inspiring them to actively engage in learning, cultivating their awareness of innovation and creativity.



In many years of teaching practice, our teachers arduously combine research and teaching, making great research achievements in gifted education with widespread social influence. We published many books, including *Identification and Cultivation of Gifted Children*, *Cradle of Gifted Children – Experimental Gifted Course at Beijing No. 8 High School*, *Family Education of Gifted Children*, and *Growth Place of Gifted Children*, *Collection of Papers for the 20th Anniversary of the Gifted class in Beijing No. 8 High School*. A collection of 30 years of gifted education in Beijing No.8 High School.

Our teaching research achievements are highly recognized and rewarded. The research achievements of *Identification and Cultivation of Gifted Children* won

the first prize of the Seventh Five-Year Education and Teaching Research Award of Beijing in 1992, the Special Award of Basic Education and Teaching Achievements of Beijing in 1999, and the second prize of the Second China Education Science Achievements Award in the same year. The follow-up research on the development of gifted children won the second prize of the Second Education Science Achievements Award of Beijing in 2008.

The innovative practice and research on the cultivation of highly intelligent students for top innovative talents won the first prize issued by Beijing Municipal Educational Committee in 2018, and also the second prize of the National Ministry of Education Award in the same year. From 1993 to 2019, the school dispatched 191 teachers in 27 delegations to 14 sessions of the World Conference on Giftedness and 13 sessions of the Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness, and presented 117 papers in those conferences.

From 1998, the school conducted a follow-up survey for 203 graduates of the first to sixth gifted class through questionnaire and interview. Feedback from 196 graduates indicated that they show good psychological qualities, strong social adaptability, learning potential and workability in college study and work. 140 of them have received a master's or doctor's degree, accounting for 71.4% of the total. The survey also covered how the students felt about the gifted education they received. They were very satisfied with the role played by the academic structure, curriculum provisioning, discipline-specific teaching, education and management in their mental and physical growth and the cultivation of social adaptability. The follow-up investigation of the graduates

showed that the students of the gifted class have the following advantages:

- *Better physical quality than other students of the same age:* when they were enrolled, students of the gifted class displayed ordinary health, quality and growth indicators (many of which were below the average levels). But when they graduated, they were all physically fit, with 93.3% of them reaching the top or better-than-average levels in the physical rating according to the standards for urban students of Han nationality in China, and the remaining 6.7% reaching the average levels. All these indicators were better than the average levels in Beijing and even across China.
- *Comprehensive growth and sound social adaptability:* According to frequent feedback and the systematic follow-up study of graduates, students of the gifted class boast solid foundations for their college study and work, outstanding ability, sound mental



quality and social adaptability. Take Class 1 as an example, 9 graduates serve as professors or research fellows at colleges or research institutes, 19 graduates work at companies (7 of them are self-employed) in finance, computer, communications, Internet,

top management, senior analyst, R&D, 4 graduates became architects and 1 became a doctor. They report sound development in their respective trades and make great achievements. For example, Chen Xi, a graduate of Class 1, won the NSF Young Scientists Award, the highest award from the US government for young scientists. Yin Xi, a graduate of Class 5, got his full professorship in physics at Harvard University at the age of 32. Xu Qi, a female graduate of Class 5, won the national young female scientist award due to her breakthrough research in depression in 2018 in China.

Although we have carried out gifted education for over 30 years and accumulated some successful experience, there are still many difficulties and obstacles in the following aspects to overcome in practice.

-Laws and regulations in China on gifted education are absent. Therefore, such laws and regulations should be established as soon as possible to ensure the sound, high-quality and sustainable development of gifted education in China.

-The staffing, funding and career development of teachers for gifted education is not well guaranteed. Institutional support and guarantees should be rendered.

-China hasn't established a special college entrance examination and enrolment system for highly intelligent students.

In this context, we suggest that colleges and universities effectively coordinate with high schools on enrollment reform and teaching arrangements in order to cultivate real talents.

MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE. TEACHERS AND COUNSELLORS: YOU CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!



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Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. Ending poverty and other deprivations and tackling climate change is only possible if we improve health and education, reduce inequality, and encourage economic

prosperity for everyone. At this moment, more than half of children and adolescents worldwide are not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics. We need refocused efforts to improve the quality of education.

In 2016, an estimated 85 per cent of primary school teachers worldwide were trained; the proportion was only 71 per cent for Southern Asia and 61 per cent for sub-Saharan Africa[1].

As is stated by the UN, good education and (mental) health are of utmost importance if we want to end poverty and other deprivations. To offer good education and health care, we need excellent professionals in those fields.

We need excellent professionals

The aim of the Radboud International Training on High Ability (RITHA)[2] is to contribute to better education and care worldwide by training professionals in the field. We specifically focus on a special group of people that all professionals come across without always noticing them: those children, young people and adults who have high abilities, which in many cases are not recognized. Many of those people, who we need so badly to reach the SDGs, to get the peace and prosperity we aim at, do not get the chance to develop themselves up to the level they would be capable of if they had the environment and understanding they need. This especially concerns those we can consider as less privileged, because of, for example, their Social Economic Status, and/or ethnic identity.



Tone (Norway), Ava (Hong Kong) with
RITHA lecturer Liesbet

The need for excellent professionals in the education and care of gifted people is a worldwide need. That is why RITHA is offered worldwide. Another reason for our international approach is that we believe in learning from each other. The motto of our university, the Radboud University, is “Change perspective”, which is an invitation and a promise. It is the invitation to broaden your own perspectives in interaction with one another. It is the promise that wherever you come from, you can enrich your perspective at our university. By broadening our view, looking at other countries and cultures, we need to change our perspective and we will benefit from that, and so will the people we want to support, being it our students in the classroom or the struggling gifted adult we counsel.

Gifted and Talented People

Who are the gifted people and what defines them? What are the different ways in which their needs can be served? How do you know if the gifted programme for your students is of high quality? How can you influence policy in gifted education in your country?

These are questions of people working with or for gifted individuals.

In the RITHA team, we believe that education and care should be matched to the needs of people, not the other way around.

Only then, everybody will have equal opportunities to develop. By supporting the professionals that are working in the field of education and care, in amassing knowledge and abilities, that can help them to identify the – many times hidden- talents and to intervene in an effective way, talents of children, young people and adults will be recognized and they will get the support they need. This will benefit themselves and benefit society.

How can you train people all over the world? We do this by offering a blended training (80% online) focusing on the knowledge and abilities that are practiced in the fields of education and care. RITHA students become aware of their strengths and weaknesses and are encouraged to leave their comfort zone, entering their zone of proximal development. Constructive friction is important in the learning process. This is what people with high abilities experience too little.



Learning from each other

By experiencing it themselves, our students learn how important this is when they work with gifted students.

Upon completion of RITHA, students have gained experience and a deeper insight into identifying, educating and counselling gifted people in primary, secondary and higher education or in the working environment (depending on their own focus during the training). They are up-to-date with the latest scientific insights about giftedness and are able to relate to them from different disciplines. Based on this knowledge, they are able to make a valuable contribution to improve the educational or working environment for all people, including those who are most talented.

People who finish the training distinguish themselves as post-academically trained gifted experts who are capable of consistently implementing educational and counselling resources for gifted students, and they are part of an international network of professional gifted experts, who only settle for evidence-based applications and never stop learning.

What do current students think about RITHA?

Ludo, NL, male, 64, counselling gifted youth: "RITHA is just the course beyond my comfort zone I've been looking for. The lecturers are role models within a new comfort zone: positive psychology. From the start I experience an ongoing, wonderful and revealing flow."

Tomislav Goldin, male, 38 years old, school psychologist: "RITHA was exactly what I needed. The training broadened my perspective and gave me confidence to continue spreading the importance of understanding and supporting gifted children. It was encouraging and supportive to be surrounded by great and caring lecturers."

Daniella (Malta): "First of all, RITHA focuses on an area that I am really interested in, which is, gifted education. RITHA offered me a blended course where I had a mix of online learning and weekend seminars where I actually met the lecturers. The lecturers emphasized on theories but they didn't stop there. They also gave us the opportunity to put theories into practice. We were also given the possibility to plan our studies and focus on the area which interested us the most. Reflection on our growth and learning was considered very important throughout the whole journey. The lecturers gave us continuous feedback on our work and were always there to help us and offer their support. Definitely, RITHA offered me a challenging but very interesting learning experience"



Tomislav (Croatia) giving a lecture at the ECHA conference in Dubrovnik

Ksenija Benaković, psychologist, Croatia: *"I am enjoying every minute of RITHA. I appreciate very much all the literature that the teachers provided for us. I have broadened/expanded my knowledge a lot. Maybe the most important thing is that I expanded my perspective on working with gifted students! I've realized that I should never stop asking questions, exploring, learning and revising my work and approach concerning gifted education. I also learned to back up every statement that I say to practitioners with scientific results or well-researched theories or good practice. I am very happy that I can talk and exchange knowledge with other experts of gifted education in Croatia and all over Europe."*

Brighter future, better world

RITHA is a boost for change. People who finish the training not only have the knowledge and abilities to identify and support children, adolescents and adults with exceptional talent, they go beyond that. They will change our future. By opening up talent for our society, by optimizing school systems, by improving policy. It's our dream that one day everybody, also the most able ones, can use their talents to solve the problems of our wonderful planet. That's the mission of RITHA: A brighter future and a better world.

Who is the program for?

Do you work with gifted children, young people and/or adults in education or care? Do you hold at least a Bachelor's degree? Then the Radboud International Training on High Ability programme

might be interesting for you. See: www.ritha.world

Footnotes

[1] Source: Report of the Secretary-General, The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018 (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>)

[2] The RITHA is qualified by the European Council for High Ability (ECHA). Students who complete the Specialist training receive both the RITHA and the ECHA diploma and the title "ECHA Specialist in Gifted Education".

THE RISE OF GIFTED

**Author:**

Tina Harlow

Child & Family Therapist | Speaker | Consultant

Founder of Guiding Bright, Colorado

It is 2020. In this moment in history, we are the inaugural members of “Team Human” who are ushering in a new age. It takes only one short review of the news headlines from around the world last year to see that we are right smack dab in the middle of a pivotal transition. Climate change and social tensions are pushing themselves to the top of the priority list whether we like it or not.

What does this mean for the gifted community? Everything.

I am a Child and Family Therapist specializing in giftedness in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. I work with children in their homes to help them gain a better understanding of their experience in the world and guide them in mitigating presenting challenges.

In recent years, like many other therapists and educators around the world, I have seen an uptick in anxiety

levels in gifted children and adults. Children are having trouble focusing on academics and finding meaning in their studies. Many of them are preoccupied with the state of our world and find it difficult to imagine a future for themselves. Children’s greatest challenge does not lie in the presence of problems, but their feeling of impotence in being able to actively contribute to solutions. They feel impotent because we feel impotent.

Somewhere along the way, we stressed-out gifted people lost sight of the fact that we have been guiding society since the dawn of humanity. It is our area of excellence and this is our era to shine.

Endless work abounds to fulfill a sense of purpose that has been neglected for far too long. The luxurious days of philosophical banter over minutiae are done. It is time to act.

These times require a new kind of excellence. The kind of excellence that pushes us all to the very edge of our own capability.

It has been disillusioning for our children to watch the daily parade of society’s ills unfold before their eyes. However, this exposure is evidence of an evolved humanity that is no longer willing to tolerate the mistreatment of other human beings as well as our planet. This evolution is leaving our antiquated institutions behind; providing an opportunity for much-needed positive change. But before looking at what needs to change, we must first celebrate what is going well.

What is working?

Awareness

There are more gifted programs, curriculum and schools than ever before. The general public may have misconceptions about giftedness, but at least there is awareness that it exists.

More Flexibility

Our rigid systems have had to adapt to a changing population and, therefore, have become more flexible in offerings to gifted youth. In the past, our attempts to teach flexibility from within the confines of rigid structures have only served to illuminate hypocrisy and contribute to disillusionment.

Research

Recent decades have provided numerous studies on all aspects of giftedness. This field is a hotbed for continued research and development.

Talent Development

Specialized programs have emerged that actively engage children's natural interests and learning styles and help them fine-tune their abilities.

Social and Emotional Aspects

Sensitivity, emotional intensity, and anxiety are discussed openly at conferences, in literature and even online forums. This is normalizing the gifted experience for our youth.

Creativity

We have finally come to realize that creativity and intelligence often go hand-in-hand.

We have also learned that active stimulation of this aspect of ourselves provides numerous positive benefits. Creativity is now being considered by many schools as an essential core component of educational curriculum.

We have made significant gains over the years, but we still have a long way to go. I humbly offer a few suggestions to enable the gifted to rise:

Areas for Continued Growth

Collaborative Streamlining

"Gifted land" is confusing and this should be no surprise. It is a gifted trait to take simple concepts and over-complicate them. We have divided and sub-divided ourselves into a variety of schools of thought and it does not seem to be doing anyone, especially our youth, any favors.

A culture of competition has permeated society for many years; pitting child against child and country against country. Competition has its place, but in my experience, a culture of collaboration provides the greatest avenues for reducing anxiety, honoring difference, and fostering interdependence.

Imagine the learning opportunities for our youth if we were to put aside our own egos and agendas to develop collaborative programming that best serves the common good.

Meaningful Education

When faced with daunting societal issues, many gifted children, like many gifted adults, feel compelled to act. The 21

educational systems which have the best chance of engaging gifted youth are those which empower them to take part in creating solutions to world problems and bringing them to fruition. Some schools allow children to take a day off of school to engage in activism. It is important that we stand alongside children.

Ethics

Our competitive world prioritizes rapid implementation of innovation often with little regard for the potential negative impacts to our world. We simply cannot continue producing in this haphazard way. It is imperative that we incorporate ethical thought and practices into all aspects of society starting with our educational systems.

Acknowledge the Good

When parents describe their children in primarily negative terms, my first priority is helping them to seek out and acknowledge the good in their child. This simple, well-known technique often makes a significant difference in shifting perception. When we praise the behavior we want to see, it begins to take precedence over negative ones.

When advocating for change, we must take care to speak out against the behavior instead of the person. Digital attacks are destructive and only serve to widen the gap within our own tribe. This emotional brutality and public shaming is also keeping many of our gifted youth from venturing into leadership roles.

Summary

The gifted population is made up of creative, strategic, innovative and resilient people with a knack for solving complex puzzles. The combination of climate change and societal conflict offers, what may be, our greatest human challenge to date.

Let us rise together. It is time.

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The 2020 World Giftedness Center International Conference, November 2-5, 2020, Dubai 2020 EXPO Convention Center, United Arab Emirates (UAE)



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.

Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness 2020 July 30 - August 3, 2020, in Daegu, Korea

Beyond Intelligence: Entrepreneurship, Leadership, and Ethical Minds



<http://www.apfggiftedness.org/>

The 17th ECHA Conference of the European Council for High Ability: 9 to 12 September 2020, in Porto, Portugal

Gifts and Talents: Values for the Future



The conference will be organised by the APCS - Portuguese Association for Gifted Children in partnership with the Higher School of Education of Paula Frassinetti. This conference aims to define force lines in the educational policy field, to promote a higher level of scientific knowledge, to share innovative action models and to enhance, in this field, the combination of educational efforts in the European Union and at world level. The conference will bring together scientists in this domain of interest from around the world.

<http://echa2020.org/>

International Congress on Gifted Young Scientists Education in Istanbul, Turkey from 24-26 October, 2020

ICGYSEducation

Talent, Technology and Future, 1st International Congress on Gifted Young Scientists Education (ICGYSE).

Gifted Young Scientists Education, founded in 2013, has started to be discussed in the world with the academic journal Gifted Young Scientists. The ultimate in science education is for the education of gifted children. The problem of how gifted and also young scientists will be trained is the most important problem of education.

<https://icgyse.net/about-icgyse/>

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC) August 1 - 5, 2021, Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Developing The Future Of Gifted Education

The 24th WCGTC World Conference will be hosted at the Dubai World Trade Centre, August 1 – 5, 2021. The conference will focus on the theme of Developing the Future of Gifted Education. The World Conference is a great opportunity for researchers, educators, psychologists, parents, and other stakeholders to gather from around the globe to discuss the vital matters, issues, and concerns that impact the field of gifted education and gifted and talented children. The World Conference will be hosted by the Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation for Distinguished Academic Performance

<https://worldgifted2021.com/>

Call for Advertising Conferences

Looking to share your conference with the world?

Send a brief description of the conference to:

WorldTalentWeb@ha.ae

(not more than 70 words)

“The WorldTalentWeb newsletter's team is very happy to advertise your conference.”

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