

ECHA NEWS

EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR HIGH ABILITY

AUTUMN 2017

Presidential Report to the ECHA General Assembly 15th September 2017, Brugg-Windisch

Dear ECHA Members,

First and foremost: great apologies that I am unable to present this report personally. Originally I had noted a different time of the hosting congress to my calendar, and by the time I realized the exact date, there was an overlapping commitment, which I was unable to change. I am thankful to Albert Ziegler, our vice-president, to convey this report to you. The report covers the 1.5 years from our 2016 General Assembly last March in Vienna. However, I have good news: I will be brief.

ECHA is first and foremost serving its members. A few highlights of this work from the past 1.5 years will follow.

■ ECHA has its 30th birthday this year. It was on 29th May 1987, when ECHA was founded in Utrecht. The General Committee decided to celebrate the 30th birthday by collecting information on all international ECHA Conferences and by publishing them on the ECHA website. Please send your photos, or any other electronic document you have on former ECHA Conferences to Ragnild Zonneveld, the vice-president of the ECHA association in the Netherlands at echahistory@outlook.com. Ragnild will be helped in her work by our ECHA General Committee member, Lianne Hoogeveen, who keeps the ECHA archives. They will also lead the efforts to make a short history of ECHA training.

■ After issuing two calls and receiving several high quality applications, the General Committee decided that the 17th International ECHA Conference will be in Porto (Portugal) on 9-12 September 2020. The first thematic ECHA Conference on

Creativity will be in Dubrovnik (Croatia) on 16-18 October 2019. We very much hope that these conferences and our upcoming ECHA Conference in Dublin (Ireland) on the 8-11 August 2018 will have many many participants. Please mark these days to your calendar.

■ We have a stable number of paying members of ECHA, having more than 310 members now. This is the same number we had 1.5 years ago, and a significant increase from the membership a few years ago, which was below 200. Our membership will increase further as former ECHA members start to register for our 2018 Conference in Dublin.

■ Thanks to our Secretary, Colm O'Reilly and our web-master Emily Church, ECHA introduced a new membership application

system which sends automatic responses and renewal notices. We hope that this system will significantly reduce the number of previous – justified – complaints that ECHA received from the members.

■ The General Committee introduced a new understanding of the duration of ECHA membership by dividing the year into four quarters. In this way it is not an economic disadvantage to become an ECHA member e.g. in December, since this membership is not expiring within a month (as in the former system) but in September 30th next year.

■ Our scientific journal, High Ability Studies, has increased its impact factor from 0.737 to 1.13. Great thanks to all contributors and to the Editor-in-chief, Albert Ziegler!

>>> page 2

CONTENT AUTUMN 2017

■ President's Report	1
■ Editorial	3
■ South German Talent Centre	4
■ Talent Point – Forum Hochbegabung	5
■ Recent History of the Hungarian Talent Support Scene	6
■ What if ...? schools would promote the gifted and talented"	8
■ World Conference Sydney	9
■ National Correspondents	10
■ Teachers Corner	
- Increased Willingness to Learn Because of an Enrichment Project	18
- Spotted! Identification of Pre-Schoolers with a Developmental Headstart	19
■ Exploring Possibilities for Gifted Students: A Case Study from India	20
■ A Profoundly Gifted Student's Journey Through Secondary School and Beyond	22
■ Chess is a Child's Game	25

1987-88: ECHA's



Birthday!

Contribute to the history



of ECHA Conferences and training!

Send contributions to Ragnild Zonneveld at echahistory@outlook.com

■ We continued the distribution of the spring and autumn issues of ECHA News as a pdf file directly to our members. Many thanks to Annette Heinbokel for her continuous efforts to fill ECHA News with high-quality content! Please help her more in this!

■ Thanks to the efforts of Victor Müller-Oppliger, most ECHA National Correspondents have been re-elected, and members were able to read the reports of about a third of them in the spring issue of ECHA News. We will continue this series, and will re-vitalize this key asset of ECHA in other ways, too.

■ The Facebook-Group of ECHA increased its membership from 500 to more than 1900 and has a very actively changing and high quality content. Many thanks for those who contribute to the site regularly. Please join our Facebook site, if you have not done so.

■ We continue the renewal of ECHA's web-site; our new web-master, Emily Church, is establishing a personal access of ECHA members to the ECHA-intranet allowing to start discussions and establish Special Interest Groups. We are also working to introduce a PayPal payment option for the ECHA membership fee.

These were a few "small" steps to make ECHA's activity more continuous between

its excellent conferences, but none of them is really small, since they are all vital to allow our members to share their expertise and knowledge.

As large-scale steps to give ECHA more strength we focus on the following three important areas:

1. We will continue our ECHA membership campaign. The growing interest towards the European Talent Support Network will help us in this. However, your personal contribution can not be underestimated to convince people that it is worth joining the ECHA family. Please ask your colleagues and friends to be members of this excellent community!

2. The next important focus area is ECHA-education. The ECHA Education Board led by Christian Fischer worked out the basic components and conditions of the ECHA training including the details of the application and evaluation of trainings which want to be ECHA trainings. The Board will give a detailed summary of its work at the 2018 ECHA General Assembly in Dublin.

3. The 2014 General Assembly decided that ECHA will help and guide the formation of a European Talent Support Network. Currently the Network has more than 300 cooperating nodes in 39 countries in Europe and all around the

world. The 3rd round of the qualification of European Talent Centres (or Associated European Talent Centres from outside Europe) is open until the 15th October. The 3rd call to become a European Talent Point (or an Associated European Talent Point from outside Europe) will remain open until October 30th. Please spread these news! The European Talent Support Network established its own Council led by Albert Ziegler and served as its coordinator and secretary by Csilla Fuszsek. The Network has its Youth Platform which also elected its Council led by Armin Fabian. The Youth Platform organized two very successful European Youth Summits in 2016 and 2017. All future international and thematic ECHA Conferences will incorporate a European Youth Summit making a new tradition related to ECHA.

It was a great pleasure to see how the ECHA-spirit grew further in the last 1.5 years. Many thanks to all of you for your contribution! See you at the 16th International ECHA Conference (and at the next ECHA General Assembly) in Dublin between 8th and 11th of August 2018!

Peter Csermely, President of ECHA

Contact: csermelynet@gmail.com

www.echa.info

Editorial

ANNETTE HEINBOKEL, GERMANY

What struck me when reading the contributions in this issue of ECHA News: the similarities that can exist between very different countries, but also the differences.

One of the similarities is how the topic of 'inclusion' is treated. People have become aware that in the past children with physical, intellectual, mental and emotional problems have too often been either neglected or been sent off to special classes or even special schools. They were excluded from the learning and social experiences of other children and youth. Inclusion means – or should mean – that they are together with their more fortunate classmates, but still get their very different and special needs fulfilled.

However, in two very different countries, the Czech Republic and India, inclusion applies only to children with disabilities, that is where the focus is. I can confirm that it is exactly the same in Germany. When I recently offered a course in English as a second language for gifted or at least highly motivated children at a German secondary school, there was a girl who had immense problems understanding simple instructions. When I talked to a supervisor about her she went to check whether she was an 'inclusion child' (Inklusionskind), that means a girl with a handicap, in this case an intellectual one. 'Inclusion children' is the new 'politically correct' (?) expression for children with handicaps.

What many people in many countries are still not aware of: that gifted, in particular highly and profoundly gifted children, are so far different from average children that their needs are not fulfilled either. It's impossible to imagine how the needs of a profoundly gifted boy like Horatio (see article) could be met in an inclusive classroom, that because of the principle of 'total inclusion' does not even allow the options of pull-out or acceleration.

Gifted children do not have problems per se, but they can develop them if their needs are not recognized and satisfied.

One typical problem: if a gifted child is bored every day and in every lesson in school, he can become restless, disturb the lessons, run around in the classroom, become unbearable and because of that has to change the kindergarten or the school. If he is then seen as a 'problem child' and presented to an expert who knows a lot about AD(H)S, but very little or nothing about giftedness, he can be misdiagnosed and Ritalin is prescribed. This applies in particular to boys, that is why I used 'he'. The medication may work – however, in this case it would only mean that a programme that is not satisfactory for this boy will be born with slightly more patience. His problems will not be solved that way.

Gifted and bored girls often behave differently. If things go fairly well they are can be occupied as 'teacher's assistants'. When I asked parents in my study on grade skipping 'What happened before the move, was the child allowed to help or did she/he have to help? the answer was fairly clear: Boys were often allowed to help, girls had to help. If things don't go well, girls tend to develop head or tummy aches which are then not seen as a result of boredom.

One of the differences between countries: the attitudes of states towards giftedness. In states in the east, the former 'Communist' states, there were always provisions for gifted children with all forms of gifts in the form of special classes or schools, mentors or distance teaching. At least as far as sports were concerned this was well known in the west because of the medals won at Olympic games and world championships. Although things have changed immensely ever since the iron fence came down, the positive attitudes towards children with gifts and also institutions have survived. The reports from Russia, Hungary and Serbia are examples.

In states in the west, the former 'capitalist' states, gifted education was and often still is in the hands of the parents or of private institutions. At least it often started that way. To find out, read the reports from Italy and Greece. Again this ties in with the German experience. In Germany in the late 70s the German Association for the Gifted Child was not founded by, but for parents, and it is run mostly by parents of gifted children. And in the early 80s the first

classes for gifted children were opened at a private boarding grammar school. The scientists – first the psychologists, then the educators – followed later.

There are a number of reasons for the latter, the first being that intellectually gifted children were believed to be doing well anyway because they were gifted. Another reason was that parents were seen as elitist and ambitious, pushing their children, to achieve or keep privileges for them. Of course there are parents who push their children too far for their well-being, but that has little to do with the abilities of the children. In Greece, 'political parties hesitate to "touch the issue", because of the fear of being blamed by their followers of elitism or "anti-democratic" believes and attitudes'. This leads to ambivalence on the subject among teachers and academics. However, the 'gifted and talented students themselves, along with their parents, are not ambivalent, they ask clearly that their needs are fulfilled as well.

In Germany the Socialist party, the SPD, has only recently come round to the idea that something needs to be done for gifted children as one SPD-senator said in 2016: "Right wing people look after the clever ones, left wing people after those that have been left behind: it doesn't work that way." In reality the promotion of bright children is a question of social justice, therefore a "genuine left subject". The leftist teachers' union, the GEW, has not caught on to that yet. When in 2016 it was announced that millions would be spent on gifted education in the following ten years, Marlis Tepe, head of the union, suggested the money had better be spent on children with problems and/or deficits.

As for parents pushing their gifted children: Some children have a 'rage to master' (Ellen Winner). If that is the case, it's the children who push their parents (see the chapter on chess in the Serbian report and the one on chess).

Annette Heinbokel, editor

Contact: annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de

The South German Talent Centre

SUSANNE SCHOBER, GERMANY

The South German Talent Centre was founded under the umbrella of the Chair for Educational Psychology at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg (Prof. Dr. Dr. Albert Ziegler) and the Chair for School Research, School Development, and Evaluation at the University of Regensburg (Prof. Dr. Heidrun Stöger). In 2016 it was registered by the European Talent Support Network as a European Talent Centre. It is committed to a systemic approach to all aspects of gifted education. With this systemic orientation and the ample experience it aims at advancing the following main objectives:

- to create an interdisciplinary network of research on giftedness
- to train and motivate teachers, parents, and administrators on all aspects of gifted education
- to counsel and promote gifted students how to best live up to their potentials and to offer them opportunities to form networks with other gifted students, but also with mentors and gifted educators
- to develop strategies for enhancing public awareness of gifted education

As a European Talent Centre we offer the following to maintain and extend the European Talent Support Network:

- recruiting and registering new European Talent Points in Southern Germany (in 2017: the "Forum for the Highly Gifted" in Hof and the "German Association for the Gifted Child - Bavarian Regional Branch" in Munich)
- partnership and counselling in applying for funding of research on giftedness or practical activities in the field of gifted education
- partnerships in joint research studies
- acting as mediators to any existing exchange program in our region
- sharing our expertise in various ways, for example by serving on more than 50 boards of national and international organizations who are in one way or another connected to giftedness (mainly editorial boards of journals and magazines, teacher associations, parents associations, counselling centres, research centres) and by working in

various functions (vice-president of IRATDE and ECHA; chairman of the ETSN; secretary-general of IRATDE; Editors-in-Chief of journals and book series)

- opportunities for visiting scholars on all levels of academia
- the opportunity to internships and sitting-ins on counselling sessions and trainings in our counselling centre
- regular national conferences for practitioners (e.g. "Bildungsdialog Franken"; HoTM) and researchers (next we will host the "American-European Summit on Giftedness" in 2018)

Susanne Schober is Chief Executive of the South German Talent Centre and works as research fellow at the Chair for Educational Psychology and Research on Excellence at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg where she is also responsible for counselling gifted children and their parents.

Contact: susanne.schober@fau.de
web: www.talentcentre.de



European Talent
Support Network
LBFH

South German Talent Centre

LEADERSHIP TEAM OF THE SOUTH GERMAN TALENT CENTRE



Albert Ziegler
Head of Nuremberg Branch



Bettina Harder
Head of Counseling



Susanne Schober
Chief Executive



Heidrun Stöger
Head of Regensburg Branch

Talent Point – „Forum Hochbegabung“

SABINE SCHRAML, GERMANY

“Forum Hochbegabung” (“Forum Giftedness”) – founded in 2000 – is a non-profit organization for affected families and persons who, for professional or personal reasons, deal with this subject. It was founded in close collaboration with school counselling and education offices in Upper Franconia (South Germany) at that time. Now the organization is working all over Germany.

It is financially and organizationally supported by partners like health insurances and other cooperative partners.

The work is based on the following pillars:

- Counselling
- Training (for teachers, educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, colleagues in other institutions)
- Parent groups
- Events for kids

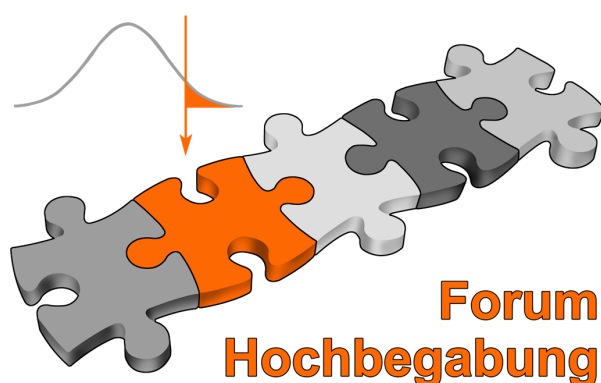
The main task is to spread information about giftedness and the special needs of gifted children. We give advice to parents on their way to understand the needs of their children and to get the right support for their kids. Therefore we help to coordinate the steps parents have to do and we organize cooperation with other institutions. Another important function is to provide education and training and to share proper research-based information on giftedness.

In order to achieve these goals, we are focusing on regional, national and international partnerships and exchanges.

We offer public lectures twice a year, and every five years a symposium with competent and well-known speakers from research institutes and best practice experts.

Sabine Schraml is an educator, ECHA-Coach and a PSI Competence Consultant; she was the founder and has been leader of “Forum Hochbegabung” since 2000. She works as a freelance consultant in gifted education for different cooperation partners. She regularly conducts training at schools, kindergartens and other institutions working with gifted and talented children.

Contact: mail@forumhochbegabung.de
www.forumhochbegabung.de



IMPRINT

Editor ECHA News
Annette Heinbokel

Publisher
ECHA News is published by
the European Council for High
Ability

Copy ECHA News
Please send contributions to:
Annette Heinbokel
Bismarckstr. 100
28203 Bremen Germany
Phone: +49 421 69675131
annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de

ECHA members also receive:
HIGH ABILITY STUDIES
The Journal of the European
Council for High Ability
Editor-in-Chief Heidrun Stoeger
heidrun.stoeger@ur.de

Layout
Dicks Werbeagentur
49134 Wallenhorst · Germany
info@dicks-werbeagentur.de

Published by:
Carfax Publishing,
Taylor & Francis Ltd.
Customer Services Department
Rankine Road
Basingstoke, Hants RG24 8PR,
UK
www.carfax.co.uk/has-ad.htm

Short Introduction to the Recent History of the Hungarian Talent Support Scene

RITA NÁDAS, HUNGARY

Following several substantial public and civil society initiatives in the past 30 years, in 2006, Hungarian talent support activities were brought under the National Talent Support Council, an umbrella organisation. With its 44 members, the Council has over 100 partner organisations and counting. Three main goals have been achieved: (i) creating an opportunity for the Hungarian and cross-border talent support NGOs to reconcile their standpoints, in a number of ways; (ii) acting as a forum on the talent-support-related plans of the administration and exercising social control over its activities; and (iii) offering member organisations an opportunity to publish information about themselves on their common website¹ as well as in publications, at regional information points (Talent Points), regional fora and in the media. Shortly after its foundation, the Council established the Hungarian Association of Talent Support Organisations (MATEHETSZ), a legal personality to pursue its operative activities.

Talent support became a national issue in 2008 when the Hungarian Parliament recognised it as a public programme by passing the National Talent Programme (NTP) strategy of 20 years (2008-28). The fundamental values of the NTP are value preservation, diversity, creating opportunities, continuity and interoperability, selection and self-development, efficiency, the gradual approach, responsibility and social commitment, appreciation of the talent support staff, sustainability and social support. In the following year the decrees on the institution of the financial bases of the talent programme was passed as well, becoming a significant milestone in the history of Hungarian talent development. Financed through the National Talent Fund on the basis of the recommendations of the Talent Co-ordination Forum, the programme's operational objectives are broken down to biannual action plans

which all include a priority development topic. Apart from the parliamentary resolutions enabling Hungarian NGOs to participate in the national talent scene, the state has also supported NGO programmes using European Union funds by launching a 20-year period (2008-2028) of awarding grants of significant amounts for national talent development. Between 2011 and 2016, almost 7000 grants have been allocated of an overall worth of 10.8 billion HUF (35 million Euros).

MATEHETSZ, benefiting from these funds, implemented the Talent Bridges Programme (2012-2015) as part of the 20-year National Talent Programme, and also its direct antecedent, the Hungarian Genius Programme (2009-11), resulting in the establishment and strengthening of the network of Talent Points, supporting a populous and diverse team of professionals with adequate qualification to detect, identify and develop talents. The main tenet of the Talent Bridges Programme was that talent support is a national cause; also expressed by the relevant parliamentary resolution which stated (signifying the State's commitment to Talent development) that talent is a main driver and its expansion and utilisation fosters social and economic growth. It is imperative to support the professional and the personal development of talented youth. A priority project enjoying EU support, the programme was co-funded by the European Social Fund and the Hungarian State with a budget of almost 2 billion HUF (near 6.5 million Euros). As a result, the programme upgraded the network structure by providing support of the Talent Points: deepened the social integration within the network; triggered more active social participation and converted talent support initiatives into practice. It stimulated the operation of the currently over 1500 Talent Points; activated the network of professionals; provided relevant in-service training. Besides, it launched a domestic as well as EU-wide (for those who were interested) campaign to raise awareness of the Hungarian talent support model and the mutual benefits

inherent in it, and to strengthen the relationships between the domestic and the foreign talent support workshops and programmes.

By 2012 self-organised talent councils had also emerged, yielding the most important results of the co-operation model. The councils are partly built on both existing (such as the association of teachers of mathematics), and new NGOs dedicated to talent support and undergoing dynamic development (Talent Support Council of County Somogy, Roma Talent Support Council, Council to Support Talents with Special Educational Needs etc.). The youngest NGO in the framework of MATEHETSZ founded in 2012 is the Budapest-based European Talent Centre (EUTC), funded mainly by and dedicated to the goals of the Hungarian National Talent Programme. It aims to promote the establishment of the European Talent Support Network. Co-operation between EUTC the European Council for High Ability (ECHA) is exceptionally important in this work.

2015 has seen a significant venture in talent development activities in Hungary managed by MATEHETSZ, both in its significance and its sheer size. A two-year programme, the Hungarian Templeton Programme identified 314 exceptional talents out of almost 20,000 applicants aged 10 to 29 using a complex identification process, consisting of three rounds of online tests and personal interviews. Exceptional cognitive talents called the Junior Templeton Fellows were given a one-year personal support in order to nurture their talents in their individual fields of interest. The opportunities included mentoring, coaching, personal development, as well as a wide range of soft-skill courses ranging from networking and communications, through courses in language, computer courses, research & innovation, entrepreneurship to career orientation and social responsibility. According to the programme's motto ('Free talent'), Fellows were given a strong identity and they learnt how to benefit

responsibly from the various opportunities and present themselves and their topics effectively. The Fellows formed Templeton Alumni groups to continue co-operations even after the end of the Hungarian Templeton Programme.

Founded in 2015, the Budapest-based New Generation Centre (Új Nemzedék Központ, UNK), a background institution of the Ministry of Human Capacities is the latest milestone in the Hungarian talent scene. Its aim to provide talent development opportunities for Hungarian youth is supported in four distinctive strategies:

- (i) implementing and piloting a complex online identification and screening system involving both cognitive and non-cognitive measurements which are also accessible for students with learning disabilities. The implementation will include adapting, standardising and designing measurement tools for individual administration.
- (ii) carrying out research in the field of giftedness. One scope of research aims at identifying and categorising best practices or resources which may be needed or flexibly used; the other scope aims at enhancing equal access to talent development opportunities by identifying current gaps or problems of accessibility of these. Further research is being done on expectations and needs of talent

development (e.g. expectations of talented students, their parents and employers); others support talent-friendly school environment by mapping the motivation, attainment as well as their expected future opportunities.

- (iii) Enhancing the nationwide accessibility of talent development by identifying and supporting Accredited Talent Development Points. There are currently 38 of such Points, all state schools, acting as regional centres of modelling talent development institutes. They run talent development programmes, spread best practices and join the existing network of similar Points.
- (iv) Organising the first Budapest Talent Summit in the spring of 2017 in Budapest with nearly 500 participants, focusing on the topic of creativity and STEM areas. The conference invited the renowned experts of the field, such as Joan Freeman, Rena Subotnik, Anita Kolnhofer-Derecskei, Márta Turcsányi-Szabó, Jonathan Plucker, Csilla Fuszek, and Moshe Zeidner.

One of the priority projects currently running and managed by the UNK in cooperation with MATEHETSZ is titled Talents of Hungary, a four-year programme between 2016 and 2020 operating on a budget of 6 billion HUF (20 million Euros). Its activities are related to the goals (i) (ii) and (iii) of UNK outlined above, as well as organising

specific talent development programmes for youth aged 5 to 25, especially those studying in the public education system; coordinating and developing regional talent support systems, connecting talent programmes between those run by NGOs and the industry; connecting the talent development network with the public education professional network; implementing and spreading a tutor service by developing a professional network of tutors, training and supervising tutors; establishing scholarship support for exceptionally talented youth. The project aims to involve at least 50.000 talented youth and train at least 10.000 talent professionals.

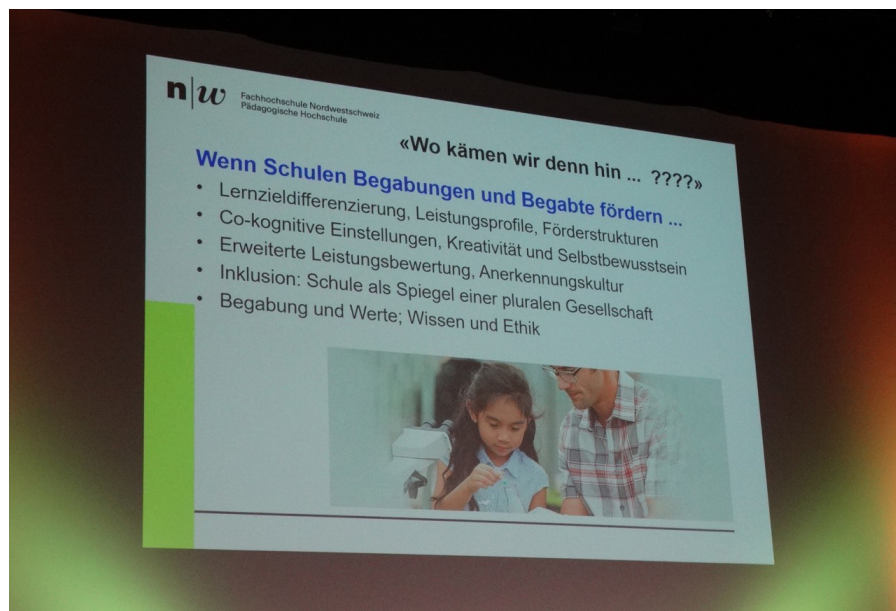
Rita Nádas has a MA in Psychology (Budapest) and a Master in Education (Cambridge). Currently she is working as mentor and programme director at a European Talent Point in Budapest. She has been involved in writing and teaching aspects of talent development within the EGIFT project which aims to produce an open online course on developing talent programmes worldwide.

Contact: ritanadas@googlemail.com

¹ www.tehetsegpont.hu

Swiss Conference in Gifted Education and Talent Development 2017

What if ...? schools would promote the gifted and talented"



VICTOR MÜLLER-OPPLIGER,
SWITZERLAND

More than 750 participants attended this year's international conference on gifted education and talent development at the University for Education and Teacher Training of Northern Switzerland from September, 14th until 16th at the Campus of Brugg Windisch.

The conference was opened by our well known colleague, author of the creativity test TSD-Z and former president of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Klaus K. Urban. He tuned the audience in with a slam poetry about "Inclusion exclusive". After the aligning opening speech of the conference director, Victor Müller-Oppliger, Thomas Trautmann from the University of Hamburg and Margret Sutherland from the University of Glasgow opened the conference with their keynotes on "High-flyers, who are not able to fly" and "Including the gifted and talented in inclusive education".

Other main speakers were Sally Reis & Joseph Renzulli (University of Connecticut/ USA), Christian Fischer, Julius Kuhl, Heidrun Stöger, Gabriele Weigand and Albert

Ziegler (Germany), Aljoscha Neubauer, Roland Grabner (Austria) and Letizia Gauck, Dominik Gyseler, Victor Müller-Oppliger and Willi Stadelmann (Switzerland).

Between the presentations 82 workshops made possible that the participants could select their individual focusses, interests or needs of their schools. The topics of the various workshop groups were:

- School concepts to promote the gifted and talented: Gifted education within regular classes, supplemental and extra-school (in collaboration)
- Unidentified talents: Underachievement, gender aspects, minorities and underserved students
- Transformation from potential to high achievement: motivation, volition, strategies and attitudes
- Validation of individual achievements: culture of recognition and appreciation in schools
- Differentiated learning architectures and environments; personalized learning
- Promotion through mentors: mentoring systems

In addition to the workshops, special discussion panels were provided: "For principals, school authorities and policy makers", on "Talent development at

universities" (honours programmes) and the iPEGE-Symposium about "Inclusion in gifted education".

Within the conference, the annual General Assembly of ECHA was conducted under the lead of Albert Ziegler, Vice President, and Colm O'Reilly, Secretary of ECHA. But also some other special events took place, like the vernissage of a longtime expected new Swiss book (with a video of best practices) on gifted education for secondary schools: "Begabungsförderung steigt auf".

The social event (circle of friendship) and banquet took place at the Habsburg castle. The event brought together people from different nations, schools and backgrounds and enabled personal, national and international networking and collaborations crossing all boundaries.

The goals of the conference were national and international exchanges of expertise and experiences but also the collaboration between teachers, specialists in gifted education, researchers, school authorities and policy makers. And it was quite impressive and a favor for the conference to see how many board members (Executive, General and Educational Board) of ECHA were involved as speakers, workshop presenters or experts in the various panels.

The next Swiss Conference which is part of the "three-years-circle" between the University of Münster (icbf; Germany), the Austrian Research and Support Centre for the Gifted and Talented (özb; Salzburg) and the University for Education and Teacher Training of Northern Switzerland (PH FHNW) will be held in September 2020 in Basel, Switzerland

More information, all the presentations and pictures of the conference can be found on

www.BegabungsforderungKongress.ch

Victor Müller-Oppliger is a member of the ECHA Executive committee and organizer of the conference

Contact: victor.mueller@fhnw.ch



The new Executive Committee of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children

Foto: Heinbokel

Uniting Cultures, Unifying Knowledge: the 22nd Biennial World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children in Sydney

FEMKE HOVINGA, THE NETHERLANDS

The hallway of the University of New South Wales in Sydney is buzzing with conversations in a variety of different languages. Some 730 professionals from the gifted field have gathered here in Australia's largest city to attend the 22nd Biennial Conference organized by the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. The attendees – academics, teachers, parents and researchers – flew in from thirty different countries, varying from the Philippines to Kenya. All share one goal: to learn from each other during this unique four-day conference.

"There might be one gifted"

Having lived in Sydney a while ago, I arrived a few days early. This left me with some time to visit various schools in the area. One of them in the Western Sydney suburbs serves 450 students, but has little experience with talent and giftedness. The principle said "there might be one gifted girl in 6th grade, but that would be it". Hard to imagine for us, but the truth in many schools around the world. An extra motivation to keep doing the work we are!



Femke Hovinga presenting Foto: Hovinga

The chilly Sydney streets are filled with rays of wintery sunshine as the conference is about to commence. The theme of this year's conference is 'Global Perspectives in Gifted Education', which provided the 250 speakers with food for thought for their total of over 150 sessions. Besides these parallel sessions, there were eight inspiring keynotes. As hard as it is to summarize a conference, let's try to highlight some of the most important matters that were discussed.

Highlights from around the world

A few highlights: Professor Kirsu Tirri from the University of Helsinki spoke about Holistic Perspectives on Gifted Education

for the 21st century. She shared examples of her fatherland of Finland, related to how Dweck's Growth Mindset helps schools. Tirri's recent research has shown that parents in Finland have more fixed mindsets related to giftedness than teachers (Kuusisto & Tirri, 2013), which was a surprise to quite a few non-Finnish members of the audience.

Another very inspiring keynote was held by Professor Karen Rogers. She spoke about finding and supporting twice exceptionals (2E) in schools. She did not only share research by, among others, Linda Silverman and Michelle Ronsley-Pavia but also took the audience right back to their schools. What can you do for the 2E population tomorrow? According to her, we should look at the bright side of twice exceptionality more often. And did you know quite a few teenage idols are in fact 2E? Adele is GT/EBD (emotional disturbance and behavioral disorders), and Jay Leno GT/SLD (specific learning disabilities). Twice exceptionality was a very popular theme during this conference, it was addressed frequently in the parallel sessions as well. >>>

www.echa.info

Too many sessions to choose from

Due to the immense amount of choices in sessions, it was only possible to attend approximately one tenth of them. I would however like to share three personal highlights. The first was to see Sydneysider Dr. Miraca Gross speak, she is still enjoying her work and research at age 73 – and so was the audience. Together with inspiring Vanessa Wood (USA) she spoke about her passion for the highly and profoundly gifted. The second highlight: Dr. Michele Kane addressed the very important topic of supporting the sensitive gifted child, many of us will recognize how challenging but also rewarding this can be. And the third: the mini symposium about making gifted education more inclusive on a day to day basis, by Dr. Gilman Whiting, Dr. Marcia Gentry, Dr. Nielsen Perreira, Dr. Matthew Fugate and Dr. Richard Olencheck.

This conference has been a great inspiration and a breeding ground for wonderful new connections around the globe. I am very thankful to have been able to be part of this. Thank you to all speakers for bringing inspiration and knowledge to the conference. Also, a heartfelt thank you for organizing, local conference committee: Jennifer Jolly, Jae Yup Jung, Susen Smith, Debby Sundy, Melinda Gindy, Zdena Pethers and Christine Ireland. And thank you for all the hard work and dedication, executive committee: Denise Fleith, Leonie Kronborg, Humphrey Obora, Julia Link Roberts, Umit Davasligil, Margaret Sutherland and Tyler Clark. I cannot wait to attend the 23rd biennial conference in Nashville (TN, USA), music city, in 2019!

Femke Hovinga, MSc, attended the world conference for the first time. She is an educational consultant at *Take on Talents* (www.takeontalents.com) and presented two sessions about these experiences with her colleague Tijn Koenderink. She also founded *Talentissimo*, the European Platform for the Highly and Profoundly Gifted (www.talentissimo.eu) and acts as the representative for SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted, www.sengifted.org) in Europe.

Contact: femke@takeontalents.com

REFERENCES

Kuusisto, Elina; Tirri, Kirsi (2013). *How Finland serves gifted and talented pupils*. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*

Reports by National Correspondents of ECHA

INTRODUCTION

ANNETTE HEINBOKEL, GERMANY

Editor of ECHA News

Contact: annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de

Here you find the reports by eight National Correspondents. It's exciting to read where and how things are moving forward for gifted children in Europe, and also in Canada: there are a few National Correspondents of ECHA outside Europe. Of course everybody is happy about an elaborate article. However, the reports do not always have to be long: we are all looking forward to what Lony Schiltz will have to tell us about Luxembourg this time next year.

CANADA



KARIN TISCHLER

Contact: ktischler10@gmail.com

This may be the first Canadian ECHA national correspondent report in a long period of time and thus I want to give a brief overview for people who may not be that familiar with the gifted landscape in Canada. As a resident of British Columbia and former vice president of the Gifted Children's Association of British Columbia (GCABC) I will present more details about the situation of the gifted association in British Columbia. Finally, I will provide some updates on Canadian involvement with gifted communities abroad and additional resources regarding Canadian gifted education information.

Canada-wide gifted association and GCABC:

There has never been a Canada-wide gifted association. Years ago, there was a Canadian sub-group of The Association

for the Gifted (TAG), a division of the Council for Exceptional Children. Lannie Kanevsky and the late Michael Pyryt edited a newsletter that was distributed to the Canadian TAG members.

As national correspondents have mentioned in the ECHA March 2017 newsletter, gifted associations go through ebbs and flows based on financial resources and the availability and support of their mostly volunteer based boards and members. Based on my internet research, only four (AB, BC, QC & ON) of the ten provinces / three territories currently have an active gifted association. The activities that these groups offer vary from parent social gatherings, online resources & social media forums / groups, speaker events to children's camps, conferences and advocacy.

According to several still visible but now defunct websites / links, in the past 10 - 30 years additional provinces (NB, NL and MB) have had active organizations. Lesley Ansell-Shepherd was the president of the GCABC in those days. She also started the only Canada-wide gifted resources website (still functioning, last updated in spring 2007). In addition to helping to advocate for gifted children, she spent many evenings manning a toll-free gifted telephone hotline for anxious parents in the days before social media. Tragically, Lesley passed away well before her time and two summers ago Patricia Susan Jackson, former vice president of GCABC and I (as the representatives of the BC gifted community) attended Lesley's celebration of life ceremony to pay tribute to her highly appreciated efforts.

Since its foundation in 1983 GCABC has gone through many iterations and several times was nearly defunct. In 2014, Debbie Clelland took on the presidency to resurrect the organization that had provided much support to her family over the years. After three years of focusing their efforts on providing several parent events per year

as well as online resources, the 2017/2018 GCABC outlook is a more internationally diverse board (with board members from Sweden, Germany and the newly elected president from Brazil), a stronger social media presence and a plan to add an advocacy group.

Canadian involvement in the international gifted community: – Introduction of Patricia Susan (Sue) Jackson

We are very fortunate that Patricia Susan (Sue) Jackson, world-renowned psychologist, author, movie producer (RISE), founder and therapeutic director of the Daimon Institute for the Highly Gifted, lives and works locally in White Rock, British Columbia. Sue Jackson has spent the past 25 years of her life exclusively working with and supporting highly and profoundly gifted children, youth and adults. She has helped literally thousands of people from mental despair to being able to become the healthy and wonderful people that they were supposed to be. She has advocated tirelessly for her Daimonite children at schools across the world to ensure that they receive the education they need to thrive at their level. Sue is now writing a series of books to share her life's work in greater detail in order to help a much wider audience than she could see in her BC practice.

As part of her annual local community engagement she keynoted at the AGM of the GCABC in 2016 with a talk entitled "Resilient, calm and deeply engaged: 27 strategies to promote optimal well-being in our brilliant, intense, and asynchronous kids."

Sue Jackson has recently founded Daimon International, a worldwide initiative focused on setting up a support community for highly and profoundly gifted children and adults across many subject matters. As part of this initiative Sue Jackson presented at the EU Conference on the "Fostering and Development of Talent" in Bratislava in the fall of 2016. During this trip she also visited with Csilla Fuszek and presented at the European Talent Centre in Budapest. Presentations and meetings with Claudia Resch from the ÖZBF and Hans-Ulrich

Greiner, former DGhK president, followed. In 2017 Sue Jackson visited Utrecht, NL, to present a two day workshop about being highly gifted on September 29th/ 30th in conjunction with IeKu.

For further information please visit <https://www.iekunl/highly-gifted-uitzonderlijk-begaafd>

– World Council for Gifted and Talented Children in Sydney:

Lannie Kanevsky, Owen Lo, Michelle Bence and Andree Therrien presented at the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children biennial conference in Sydney, Australia in July 2017.

Bruce Shore (Professor Emeritus, Mc Gill University) was honored with the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children's International Award for Research at the biennial conference in Sydney in July 2017.

Additional Canadian resources:

Last but certainly not least, if you are interested in reading more in depth about gifted education in Canada, Lannie Kanevsky and Debbie Clelland have published a very comprehensive summary of educational acceleration across Canada. "Accelerating Gifted Students in Canada: Policies and Possibilities" in the Canadian Journal of Education, Vol. 36, No. 3, (2013). With the caveat that some options may have changed, Judy L. Lupart, Michael C. Pyryt, Shelley L. Watson, and Krista Pierce published "Gifted Education and Counseling in Canada" in the International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling, Vol. 27, No. 2, June 2005.

REFERENCES

- GCABC** – Gifted Children's Association of British Columbia – <https://giftedchildrenbc.org>
IeKu – <https://www.iekunl>
The Daimon Institute for the Highly Gifted – www.daimoninstitute.com
Kanevsky, Lannie & Clelland, Debbie (2013) *Accelerating Gifted Students in Canada: Policies and Possibilities*, Canadian Journal of Education, Vol 36, No. 3.
Lupart, Judy L., Pyryt, Michael C., Watson, Shelley L. & Pierce, Krista (2005, June) *Gifted Education and Counselling in Canada*, International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling, Vol. 27, No. 2.

CZECH REPUBLIC



EVA VONDRÁKOVÁ

Contact: vondrakova@gmail.com

Společnost pro talent a nadání (STaN - Association for Talent and Giftedness) has a long history and rich accomplishments.

For a start (after a long pause) I will briefly recount the most important events of the history and attractions of current events.

Its activities started in the academic year 1988/89 as the ECHA Czechoslovak branch (now STaN). It was founded by the psychologist Hana Drábková, who was also the founder of Mensa Czechoslovakia, and who was our first national correspondent. Initially, the two organizations worked closely together.

The STaN committee offered cooperation to the Ministry of Education. At the request of the Ministry of Education, STaN prepared a few concepts of plans for the care of the gifted, but their implementation never occurred.

Based on her experience with the problems associated with the education of gifted children, Eva Vondráková prepared a project of the Centre for the Development of Talent in 1990. At that time, there was very little information on how to work with the gifted and talented. After the end of the totalitarian regime (1948-1989), which restricted communication with foreign countries, participation in the second ECHA conference in Budapest 1990 gave us the opportunity to meet with experts from different countries with common interests and enthusiasm.

There I discovered the existence of CTY (Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth), which had already implemented all I had stated in my plan. Another thing there that excited me was the department that the Israeli Ministry of Education had established for gifted and science-oriented children.

>>>

It was obvious that there is a need to educate teachers and parents about these opportunities.

In January 1993, we held our first meeting of the Association of Parents of Gifted Children. To date, we have held over 200 meetings of this group.

In September 1993, the Mensa gymnasium school opened. This was a project of Eva Vondráková and K.Havlíčková.

Everyone who supports the gifted has likely encountered indifference or even resistance. It is necessary to acquaint the broader society with the issues of the gifted, and to increase their understanding, if we want to change this prevailing attitude. Currently, the main theme not only in the Czech Republic is "inclusion". In our country, unfortunately, we focused almost exclusively on the disabled. Gifted children are formally given the same decree and there are also many measures to support them. In fact, their situation is not resolved. Though the gifted have been formally recognized, nothing has been implemented to really support their needs.

Members of STaN participate in international conferences and workshops to enable the exchange of information to resolve this issue. Because we want our work to be effective and targeted on real help for gifted children, we are looking for the best examples of quality care for the gifted, both at home and abroad.

In 2016, we participated in the 15th ECHA conference in Vienna, the 13th ICIE conference in Rijeka, an excellent conference on the fostering and development of talent in Bratislava, a very fruitful meeting with Potential Plus in Hawkwood, England, and a meeting of the STaN and Mensa Gymnasium (Grammar School) board in Israel at the Ministry of Education in Tel Aviv, and at the ICEE in Jerusalem. Our tour guide there was Hava Vidergor, who was also our guest speaker via Skype at the 4th STaN Conference in 2014. Other guests at the STaN workdays and conferences were Margaret Sutherland and Jan Terje Bakler. Another guest was Kirsí Tirri on our 68th workday in March 2017.

In the Czech Republic we cooperate with the kindergarten and the primary school Ctyrlístek (Quatrefoil) in Uherské Hradiště, with the CTM (Center for Talented Minds) and the Mensa Gymnasium mentioned above.

STaN teams' websites:

www.talent-nadani.cz
www.centrumfilip.cz
www.zsctyrlistek.cz
www.mensagymnazium.cz
www.ctm-academy.cz and
www.ctm-academy.org

Our Slovak colleagues:

www.smnd.sk

GREECE



AIKATERINI GARI

Contact: agari@psych.uoa.gr

Improvements, Challenges and Ambivalence Towards the Education of the Gifted/Talented

Recent advances in the education of the gifted in Greece that were started in 2013 fortunately continue to offer chances to gifted and talented students. For four years, summer programmes, online and weekend courses and talent identification procedures have successfully been offered by the Greek "Centre for Talented Youth" (CTY-GR), at the Anatolia College in Thessaloniki, under the auspices of the Greek "Ministry of Education, Research and Religion", in close collaboration with the

Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth, and financially supported mainly by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, the John S. Latsis Foundation and others.

Additionally, the "Centre for Creativity Development" at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, which since September 2016 has been a "Talent Point" of the European Talent Support Network, continues its educational and training activities in the broader area of Athens. On August 21st 2017 it was upgraded to a "Laboratory for Creativity Development" with a National and Kapodistrian University of Athens Rector Act. This goal of reform is to give the existing staff members more and new chances to expand their activities in the areas of conducting new research projects, participating in European programmes and organizing seminars on creativity development for various age groups, while they continue training educators and teachers on giftedness and also identifying the creative, gifted and talented students referred by teachers or parents. The most recent scientific event, sponsored by the John F. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, was organized in Athens on January 14th 2017, entitled "Support and Psycho-Educational Provision for High Ability Students: The Contribution of Educators", with the participation of 157 teachers of Greek state primary and secondary education schools. Additionally, the 7th Pedagogical National Congress, entitled "Education of the Gifted in Greece" held in Athens from 15-18 June, 2017, with a large number of participation of teachers and academics participating, analysed the great difficulties of gifted and talented students that the Greek state educational system has not confronted yet.

However, all the above progress happened outside the mainstream Greek education, which is provided in state schools and universities mostly free of charge for students' families. In the last five years initiatives have mostly been taken by scholars in the areas of psychology, education and pedagogy and have been supported by international non-profit organizations (e.g. the "Stavros Niarchos", the "John S. Latsis" Foundations), national non-profit associations and societies (e.g. the "Hellenic Society for the Educational



Gerasimos Kolaitis at a conference in Athens, January 2017

Provision of Creative / Gifted / Talented Children and Adolescents") and some private schools / colleges. At the moment, no initiatives are taken by the "Ministry of Education, Research and Religion", neither in the area of Greek legislation nor in the implementation of programmes or a set of good practices at least in some of the state schools. On the contrary, an ambivalence towards the importance of providing special educational practices for gifted and talented students dominates all reforms that have been done through legislative acts. For example, the "Exemplary Experimental High- and Junior High Schools", the only state schools that, in 2011, started to proceed on educational practices that might have functioned as "cores" for providing special education for gifted / talented students, were reformed to "average schools" with the exception of a few of them. Specifically, this type of school of Secondary Education was separated into two groups: few of them remained "Exemplary Schools" and they keep selecting their students through specific exams and other criteria that take into account students' competences and school performance, but all the rest - the majority of them - were reformed to "Experimental Schools"; students of the latter are being enrolled through a draw process. Since then, educators and teachers have split in two groups, supporting the one or the opposite view regarding the goals and aims of these Experimental Schools. Few of them retain a clear idea of the importance of identifying students' abilities and the provision of differentiated and/or enriched programmes for the gifted and talented. Most of the time, political parties hesitate to "touch the issue", because of the fear of being blamed by their followers of elitism or "anti-democratic" believes and attitudes. Such a situation increases the ambivalence of teachers and academics, and especially of those who are dependent on official educational trade unions that influence political decisions. The only individuals who are not ambivalent are the gifted and talented students themselves, along with their parents, who ask clearly for special provision for their needs, in the fields of the cognitive, affective and social difficulties they face, and also for the establishment of official state educational and psychological institutions to fulfill their needs.

LUXEMBURG



LONY SCHILTZ

Contact: lony.schiltz@education.lu

In Luxemburg a new law on autonomy for secondary schools will be implemented in autumn 2017. The main content of the law concerns specific options and specializations in teaching programmes.

Therefore I prefer to wait until its effects are visible. Some secondary schools might develop special offers for gifted pupils. In autumn 2018 I will be able to write a summary of their initiatives.

ITALY



ANNA MARIA RONCORONI

Contact: gifted@roncoroni.eu

In Italy, there is a growing interest in gifted education from different points of view.

Considering the part that concerns legislation, it is now possible to include gifted students in Special Educational Needs (SEN) and so they could have the chance to have a special programme for them. But there are two points that should be discussed.

As it was formulated in the law, the SEN provisions are for students that have different types of problems, so we can summarize that the problem is a student's problem. In many cases, gifted students have some difficulties that have an environmental explanation. In these cases, they should not be included in SEN programmes but should have the right to have a programme that fulfills their individual potential. In any case it is something and we hope that there will be some correction to it.

The second point, even if is not strictly directed at gifted students: in 2018 our Ministry of Education will start an

experimental high school short-cut: 100 classrooms will have the possibility to finish in 4 years instead of the actual 5 years. Before there was already the possibility to take the high school diploma anticipating the exam when they were in year 4 of High School but very few students chose this solution. There was also a proposal for having a law that recognizes gifted students.

There are many associations for the gifted, they are very often parents' associations. They are putting a lot of effort into trying to spread information about giftedness on different occasions. That is a huge amount of work and can be very helpful because they share their experiences and try to explain how important it is to take care of gifted students, considering their needs. More or less, the majority of these associations has a scientific committee. The problem at the moment is that there is a lack of Italian experts on gifted education, in schools but especially in the field of psychology, that have a crucial role in giving information based on science, have experience in working with gifted students and can help parents and students in finding a balance between expectations and the natural process of growing up as a child.

Anyway, it seems that things are going better than before and I believe that in a mid to long term, as it is happening in other countries, we will reach the right attention and a better scientific knowledge of this so heterogeneous population of students.

The most difficult thing is and it will be the big differences between regions: but it is a challenge that we are working on.

RUSSIA



LUDMILA V. POPOVA

Contact: vlasova13@yandex.ru

What is new?

Since the 90s there have been several federal programmes to support the gifted all over the country. The latest programme called **“Concept of a National System for the Identification and Development of Young Talents”** was launched in 2015 and will function till 2020. Within the programme regional variants are functioning in all parts of the huge country. They are adapted to the economical needs of the specific region and to its educational resources. Like the previous federal programmes the present one includes standard aspects of gifted education as well as Olympiads, support of summer and winter schools, educational centres, grants for winners of competitions, young scientists and teachers who contributed to the realization of the gifted. An important innovation: the programme stimulates a wide scale usage of distant, on-line, net forms of education. In fact it's especially important for our country because it allows to reach even the smallest schools in the most distant places. This strategy is fully implemented into the work of a new Centre for Gifted Education with the symbolic name **“Sirius”**

From astronomy it is known that Sirius is the brightest star in the dark sky, which one can watch from any place of the earth. The same description is true with respect to the centre: at present it is like a beacon for the gifted. **The Centre for Gifted Education “Sirius”** was opened in 2016 in Sochi on

one of the Winter Olympiad sites. It works in courses all year round for the gifted from all places of the Russian Federation. Separate courses are arranged on arts (music, ballet, painting, drawing), science (physics, chemistry, biology), mathematics, information technologies, sports (hockey, football, athletics). Each course lasts 24 days and it's free of charge for the gifted. Gifted pupils (of 10 to 17) are recommended by their school teachers and coaches, can apply as winners of Olympiads and Competitions as well as by themselves with their own projects. Committees of experts in the field evaluate applications and make decisions.

Outstanding specialists – scientists, businessmen, musicians, athletes, experienced educators – are invited to the Centre to work together with the pupils. The specialists make their presentations, conduct workshops and master classes, take part in discussions and give interviews. Their lectures and workshops are given online and are available to all those who are interested in the subject. One of the purposes of education is to help the pupil to find her/his own goal in the field and to construct an individual trajectory to reach it. Mentor or tutor relationships are established here and, moreover, they continue after the course.

And a significant and much needed feature – there is a course for teachers who want to acquire competency in working with the gifted. Teacher training is organized in each specific subject with the help of experienced educators (scientists, teachers, psychologists, coaches) who constantly work in special schools for the gifted. More information with photos and video (also in English) on the site: www.sochisirius.ru

SERBIA



BLANKA BOGUNOVIĆ

Contact: bbogunovic@rcub.bg.ac.rs

The Gifted in Mathematics, Music and Chess: Examples of Good Educational Practice in Serbia

Our previous article published in ECHA News (Bogunovic & Krnjaić, 2013) gave a general overview of the support that the gifted in Serbia can get: an educational system of specialized schools for the gifted and the talented, extracurricular programmes, financial support for individual achievements provided by the government, scientific activities and teacher training in the fields of the natural sciences, visual arts, music and the performing arts/ballet. This time we intend to make a report a bit more focused on the examples of good educational practice in three different domains of giftedness: mathematics, music and chess. By choosing to talk about good practices we want to emphasise an approach directed towards a thoroughly planned scope of actions that truly support gifted children and young people. Also, we want to stress the fact that the process of learning in its full richness is more important than the prize and especially more important than a financial prize. However, these are usually hard to separate.

A Mathematical Grammar School

The Mathematical Grammar School (MGS) is a unique school in Serbia which has been granted the high national distinction status and is specialized for students aged 13-18 (including two final grades of primary school) who are talented in mathematics, physics and computer science. It was established in 1966. The underlying model for the MGS was a school that had been founded a year earlier in Moscow, by one of the greatest mathematicians of the 20th century - Andrei Nikolaevich Kolmogorov (<http://www.mg.edu.rs/>).

Since the very beginning, the MGS has been associated to the academic world and this two-way cooperation with eminent educational and scientific

institutions, including the University of Belgrade, the Mathematical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Physics Institute is on-going. This cooperation is particularly valuable for the school since it recruits the members of these institutions as part-time teachers: approximately 20 teachers with a PhD degree, another 10 with an MSc degree for a standard programme and as many for the extra learning activities. Since the founding of the MGS and due to its nature, professional groups of mathematics professors have had a special place and roles in the realization of the school plan and curriculum. By stating that a gifted student needs a gifted teacher, the MGS cherishes excellence among teaching staff and constantly improves it by engaging young professors, mostly former students of the MGS.

Some of the MGS strong points are:

- a specialized curriculum which ensures that the teaching of mathematics, physics and computer science is delivered on a highly advanced level;
- constant improvement of curricula and introduction of new methods of teaching, based on the MGS' experience and research, as well as on the experience of the world leading educational and scientific institutions, individual scientists and teaching experts;
- publishing relevant textbooks for students;
- a variety of teaching methods, spanning from classical to latest techniques;
- the implementation of small-sized classes, sometimes divided into even smaller ones for mentorship work, also for preparing students for competitions;
- the scientific, professional and pedagogical training of mathematics professors.

Gifted students are carefully selected through a specific admission process, which includes a specialized entry exam and the assessment of previous achievements. As a part of the policy of constantly evolving and applying a series of processes for the identification of talents, the project "Mathematical kindergarten" emerged. It is intended for children aged



Mathematical Kindergarten at the MGS

4 – 6. In an attempt to recruit and provide intensive teaching, the school organizes summer camps for maths and computer programming (age 10 - 15), along with sports and creative workshops.

Over the last four decades, more than 8000 students have been studying at the Mathematical Grammar School. Approximately 250 former MGS students now have a PhD and approximately 400 have an MSc; many of them received named professorships at eminent universities worldwide, or became world leading experts in different areas of science and industry.

MGS students have won more than 500 medals in mathematics, physics, astronomy, astrophysics and computer science at Mathematical Olympiads and in various international competitions over the years, and this is an exceptional, if not a unique accomplishment among all the schools in the world. Apart from the outstanding achievements in the main talent domain, students regularly win awards in other disciplines such as the Serbian language, history, chess, drama, sports and rhetoric. MGS has been granted a number of outstanding national prizes for exceptional accomplishments in education. A generally highly competitive atmosphere and strivings of students and teachers towards high awards which could also bring a place at highly ranked universities can sometimes impose a heavy burden on young talents.

Regional Children's Philharmonic Orchestra

The Foundation Deca Deci (Children to Children) is the establisher of the Children's Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO) and a non-profit organization founded in 2007. The head of the Foundation is Žaklina Kušić Drakulić¹. The Foundation is financially supported through private resources, donations, embassies and public and commercial companies. The funds are directed towards young musicians' further education and acquiring musical instruments of a high quality, also towards different projects involving young musicians. In addition, the Foundation has started The Children's Regional Philharmonic Orchestra (CRPO) which consists of children from the five cities of the region of former Yugoslavia: Belgrade, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo and Skopje. The Foundation tends to create better conditions for cultural collaboration and exchange in the region. It gathers professionals from various fields in order to promote music education at the youngest age. Specifically, their goals include:

1. Support, affirmation and promotion of young musical talents;
2. Promotion of music education and classical music;
3. Attracting a younger concert audience;
4. Inclusion of children without parental care and disadvantaged children;
5. Cultural exchange and collaboration between children in the region and worldwide;
6. Civil initiatives and support for active involvement of citizens in creating a better society.

While participating in music programmes of the highest standards and collaborating with renowned experts in the field of music (conductors, university music professors, and excellent teachers), children acquire knowledge and skills needed for performing on a stage which are important for their education and professional development. At the same time, they develop their individual and group playing skills, enhance social and affective capacities as well as their professional expertise. >>>

www.echa.info

How to become a member? After applying at the open contest for the orchestra member or for a solo part, young pupils of music schools (aged 9 – 15) participate in a public performance which is then judged by a commission of music experts. In general, children play string instruments, but depending on a programme that is planned, wind instruments also take a part.

How does all this work? Since members of CPO and especially CRPO do not live in the same city, the orchestra meets once or two times a year, depending on the projects and it ends with big concerts that have a great public response. When a project of CRPO is taking a place, concerts are organized in all the 5 cities of the region of the former Yugoslavia where these children come from. Some charismatic leaders/conductors who participated in these projects were Živa Ploj Peršuh, the artistic director of the Branimir Slokar Academy in Slovenia (2015) and Bojan Sudić (2016) and Ljubiša Jovanović (2017), the two professors of the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. In this way, exceptional children and exceptional music professionals gather to give a “final touch” to the performance. Before the joint performance of the whole orchestra takes place, music is practiced and rehearsed in music schools with instrumental teachers

who closely collaborate with conductors via teacher coordinators. This means that a network of teachers make these projects possible.

In addition to these concerts that attracted much attention, CPO realized many others: Humanitarian concerts for children who are cancer patients; New Year’s Eve concerts, Spring concerts, Autumn Gala concerts, and various tours through Serbia. As a means of stimulating young talents, the Foundation “Children to children” organized free public classes for young children who are interested in learning music, getting to know more about instruments, talking to peers who already play, and trying out instruments. Thanks to generous donators, members of CPO have 16 string instruments to use and play for as long as they are the members of the orchestra!

The Chess Club Beograd – Chess problem solving and composing

Chess is the domain of giftedness which occupies a completely different scope of public attention and is much more discrete. In a small Chess Club Belgrade children have the opportunity to learn and enhance their abilities in composing and solving

chess problems². Namely, it is about not so well-known sub-disciplines of chess, which are different from competitive chess playing. A quote by the great chess player Botvinnik is often repeated: “Chess is a science and an art and a sport” and it adequately refers to these three areas of chess activities. Composing is especially interesting because it includes creativity of inventing, constructing and creating problems in a game of chess.

Here they have a chance to learn from Marjan Kovačević, a psychologist by education and a chess commentator/journalist of the biggest Serbian daily newspaper Politika, by affiliation. However, his devotion is turned primarily towards composing. He gained the titles of the International Solving Grandmaster (1988) and the Grandmaster of the FIDE for Chess Compositions (2007). Since 2007, he has held the position of the world champion in chess composing! He started to play chess early, at the age of 5, and by the age of 10 he “understood” how solving chess problems works and has been dedicated to it ever since. He started composing in his 30s and this interest moved in an ascending direction. Since the age of 19, he has participated in every world championship in chess – which is 41 to



Concert of CRPO in Sarajevo, September 2017.



Students and teachers in the Chess Club Belgrade

date. Competitive chess playing does not interest him, problem solving is a technical thing, but composing is a real challenge and the beauty of the game. What is interesting for us is his 30 years of work as a chess teacher. He brought up several generations of players and has a very good insight into identifying, supporting and developing a chess talent. We asked him several questions.

Identification? Marjan Kovačević states that talent can be recognized through interest, love for the game and strong devotion and dedication – “one is either infected or not”. Here we recognize the words of Ellen Winner about “rage to master”. He observes how young chess problem solvers present a problem, how they draw it and how they come to a result based on the rules of chess. Important abilities, according to Kovačević are: quick perceiving, counting, logical analysis, combinatorics, inferencing, reasoning, deduction from many examples and personal experience, memory of the existing combinations, a short term memory of ideas that stand behind patterns of figures.

How often do exceptional talents for composition or problem solving appear? Talents in these fields are rarely discovered, because these are non-commercial fields which are not attractive to parents. Parents invest more into competitive chess playing. Marjan Kovačević thinks that is a wrong way of thinking. Problem solving and composing develop a set of cognitive skills which then have a strong transfer on other activities and interests of students. He thinks that competitive chess playing

is a waste of time and represents a whirl of ambitions and competitiveness. The effort is enormous and the effects are insignificant, as to development of young talent.

Several talented individuals appeared in chess problem solving and composing in Serbia and their life paths are, although different, still very typical. One of them started as a 9 year old and is now in the national team; another one came to Marjan Kovačević at the age of 13 with some ideas of his own drawn on a piece of paper asking for his opinion and is now one of the most perspective persons in the world of composing; and another one, who was very successful in composing, decided to pursue another profession and is excellent in other domains that have commercial benefit. There is also a group of talented people, who despite the lack of any material rewards still decide to pursue this path.

Development? The stimulation of a chess talent can start very early, depending on parental decisions and interests. Unfortunately, those who are active and successful in chess problem solving or composing at the age of 14 – 15 start leaning towards other professions and do not have time for chess. They simply “disappear” after becoming 18. They are usually academically talented as well. The problem lies in the fact that they cannot live off it. There is work for only 5 or 6 of the best ones. The second reason for their “disappearance” is that in Serbia there is no high quality teaching staff that could help children rise to a higher, international level.

Chess players in Serbia until the age of 14 are on par with the international quality levels and they win prizes. However, after that, they fail to reach the same level.

Future? It brings some good news, because the country is introducing some changes to the educational system and will make chess an optional subject in elementary schools, as well as in the Faculty of Sports and Physical Education and the Teacher Education Faculty. Therefore, more children and adults are getting involved in chess and this way of stimulation has positive effects. Outside school, a commercial approach is highly present. Namely, many private chess schools are opening nowadays and they are attracting interested children and parents, but these are mostly competitive chess players. Also, online lessons are held by chess masters.

Support? The government support is minimal; it exists solely through local governments. The funds are mainly intended for competitions and not chess schools. Summer camps are present, as well as chess associations and chess schools.

In conclusion, we could say that in three different domains of giftedness, with a different education and support structure and financial resources, one thing is clear: exceptional, dedicated, competent and charismatic teachers have a key role. Also, the government supports those domains of talents where their interest for economic development lies, so some talents are more supported than others. The private sector is taking over the education of the gifted in other domains, but to attract funding, one needs to have something to offer. And, commercialization of the field of giftedness is happening due to parental involvement in areas that will provide a better future for their children. So, developing talents is one thing and having a profession is another. Can those two go together? Or, it all depends on where talents live and what their domain of giftedness is?

REFERENCES

Bogunović, Blanka & Krnjaić, Zora (2013). *Supporting development of gifted children in Serbia*. ECHA News, 27, 2, 18-20.

¹ www.decadeci.com/sr/about-us

² www.sahklubbeograd.com

TURKEY



UGUR SAK

Contact: ugursak@gmail.com

Nationwide Identification of Gifted Students with Turkey's First National Intelligence Test

In recent years, the nationwide screening and identification of gifted students at the primary school level has been undertaken in Turkey. Every year, thousands of children are tested for gifted education programmes around the country. The number of students tested for programme admissions increases year by year. Actually, the identification of gifted students in Turkey is not a new practice carried out by the Department of Special Education and Guidance Services at the Ministry of Education. Since the establishment of the first Science and Arts Centre for the education of gifted students in 1990s, the Special Education Department has screened gifted students around the country, but these initial

practices were rather local. As the number of Science and Arts Centres has increased substantially up to over 100, the screening and identification practices have spread to all the cities around the country.

The nationwide identification of gifted students is directed by the Gifted Education Division in collaboration with the Guidance Division at the Department of Special Education and Guidance Services in the Ministry of Education. Guidance and counseling experts working in the Guidance and Research Centres run by the Special Education Departments in each city test students for gifted education programmes.

In 2017, the number of students nominated by their teachers in 1st and 2nd grades for Science and Arts Centres reached 267,214. All of these students were tested with a computer-based group ability test for screening purposes. Over 21,000 students scored above the cut-off on this test. Then they were individually tested by the ASIS (Anadolu-Sak Intelligence Scale), Turkey's

first intelligence scale. Using the ASIS, 7,329 gifted students were identified around the country and admitted to Science and Arts Centres in their cities.

In Turkey, the identification for gifted education programmes starts with teacher nominations. The director general of the Department of Special Education and the director of the Gifted Education Division plan to start the screening of gifted students in 1st grade using a computerized intelligence test. According to the plan, each child in first grade all around the country will go through intelligence assessment. By this assessment, not only students with high potential but also students with developmental delays can be detected. Shortly, as the education of gifted students has regained momentum in Turkey in the last decade, the Ministry of Education is willing to create more opportunities for gifted students, such as enrichment education programmes in each school.

Increased Willingness to Learn Because of an Enrichment Project



CÉCILE DE BRUIN, THE NETHERLANDS

Considering teacher feedback on gaining insight in students' own learning process.

The purpose of this effect study was to measure the outcome of enrichment in education in junior classes of secondary education. In offering enrichment, it is assumed that the willingness to learn in students will increase since subject material is better suited to the level of ability and interest. It was measured whether the willingness to learn of gifted students increased whilst they were setting up their own separate projects during class. Willingness to learn was graded in four dimensions:

- 1) willingness to expend cognitive effort
- 2) motivation to acquire knowledge independently
- 3) insight into their own learning
- 4) the overall appreciation of the Star Project.

It was expected that the willingness to learn of these students would be increased. Special attention was paid to the influence of teacher feedback on the students' willingness to learn. Teachers were assigned the role of process managers, offering students feedback, aimed at increasing autonomy and metacognitive skills.

The study took place in 8th and 9th grade in one school. This school was just starting a new enrichment programme: the (so-called) Star Project, which offered students the

chance to work independently on self-selected projects during school hours. A group of participating students was compared to a group of classmates who did not participate. Base line and follow-up measurements were acquired by means of written surveys among students of both the experimental and the control group. Furthermore, observations took place of start-up and progress discussions between students and their teachers on their self-selected projects. During observation, special attention was paid to the manner in which teachers provided autonomy-increasing feedback. Finally, survey research was conducted among the parents of Star Students, to assess whether they could see any change in their child's willingness to learn because of their participation in the enrichment programme. No increase



Spotted! Identification of Pre-Schoolers with a Developmental Headstart

CHABELI MIRALLES SUEIRO-GOOREN,
THE NETHERLANDS

Summary

The educational system and the government in The Netherlands have shown a growing interest in gifted learners. Giftedness, however, does not begin at school-age; pre-schoolers can also experience a need for extra attention. Especially pre-schoolers with a highly advanced development. Early identification is very important, ideally before a child starts primary school. A method for the identification of gifted pre-schoolers is therefore the central topic here.

This research focusses on the development of a questionnaire for early identification based on the Signaleringslijst Ontwikkelingsvoorsprong (Identification List Developmental Headstart) of Manon Overbeeke (2014) and the testing of the applicability and usefulness of this questionnaire. The goal was to study the experiences of parents when using the developed questionnaire, whether gifted pre-schoolers are identified with the instrument, whether the questionnaire has an added value to the instruments used by day care and whether the developed instrument can be used to identify the degree of developmental advancement of a child.

The first stage of the research consisted of developing the questionnaire and testing it in a pilot study. Parents of children between the age of two and four completed the questionnaire and shared their experiences. In the second stage of the research, after adjustment of the instrument, the

questionnaire was tested online on parents of pre-schoolers attending the day care centre KLEIN MAAR DAPPER (Small but brave) in a small city in the Netherlands. Parents were again asked about their experiences with using the instrument. With consent of the parents KLEIN MAAR DAPPER has completed the data with their information on the development of the pre-schoolers (from their own observations or from the Ontwikkelingsvolgmodel (Developmental model) of Memelink and Bonthond-Oosterhaven (2003). These results were analysed and compared.

The research suggest that the developed questionnaire is very useful in practice for the identification of advanced pre-schoolers and extremely advanced pre-schoolers. The online questionnaire is easy for parents to fill in and the results offer an insight into the different areas of development per child. The questionnaire has also added value to the instruments already in use by day care centres and can identify pre-schoolers with an extremely advanced development.

With the results of this study a protocol for the identification of advanced developed pre-schoolers in day care could be devised. More research is necessary to revise the questionnaire and to determine whether the right pre-schoolers are indeed identified correctly.

C. Miralles Sueiro-Gooren is a psychologist and coach, specialised in giftedness and gifted education. In her own practice Gaaf Begaafd she works with children, parents and professionals in creating a good and healthy living environment for the gifted.

Contact: info@gaafbegaafd.nl

in students' willingness to learn due to enrichment progress participation was found, both in the Star Students as in the control group. However, Star Students rated the value of participation in the Star Project high. They felt proud to be included in this pilot project. Their opinion was that the Star Project offered them a chance to develop themselves. In self-assessment, their insight into their own learning behaviour and their willingness to expend cognitive effort had been increased through participating in the Star Project.

Parents stated having little insight into the amount of learning outcome of their child's participation in the Star Project. However, they were able to see to what extent their child had been more or less prepared to expand cognitive effort during participation in the Star Project. From observing the discussions between process managers and Star Students, it became clear that teachers were growing into their role as process managers. They were asking more autonomy increasing feedback questions during progress discussions than during start-up discussions. Various reasons were given that could explain the research data. The paper concludes with recommendations for future research.

Cécile de Bruin (1968) finished her master's degrees in both Education (1990) and Psychology (1993) at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. She has been a specialist in gifted education since 2016, when she completed the ECHA-studies at the Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen. In 2017 she founded her own company Talentig. She is working as a tutor to (highly) gifted teenagers, parents and teachers at several schools in the Nijmegen region.

Contact: cdebruin@talentig.nl
www.talentig.nl

Exploring Possibilities for Gifted Students: A Case Study from India

JYOTI SHARMA, INDIA

BIBU BISWAL, INDIA

PANKAJ TYAGI, INDIA

SHOBHA BAGAI, INDIA

India as the second largest population in the world is blessed with immense human resources. India is among the top three young nations in the world (UNFPA Report, State of World Population, 2014)¹. As per the statistics released by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), India, (2014-15) the school attending population (in the age group of 6-17 year) is about 300 million². According to the latest Indian Census data (2011)³ the youth population in India (in the age group of 15-29 years) constitutes one fifth of the total population which will increase to 33 per cent by 2020, due to the decline in the crude death rate and better health facilities (National Youth Policy, 2014 under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India)⁴. Preparing the country to maximize the potential of young minds, the Government of India is working towards education reforms and innovations in education. Under Article 21-A of the constitution of India, the country introduced the right of children to a free and compulsory education (RTE) for all children in the age group of 6-14 years in 2010 (MHRD, 2010)⁵. The targets under RTE have been successfully achieved by now with almost 99% of children enrolled in schools. Now, the emphasis is on improving the quality of education and making education meaningful for all children.

The focus at present is on inclusive education so that all children get a meaningful education, but the focus of inclusion is limited to students with disabilities. The physical and academic infrastructure of the schools is prepared to accommodate the learning needs of differently able children. Similarly, educational policies are also aiming at attracting academic talent among school children. Below are a few independent schemes supported by the Government of India to identify academically talented students, mostly in Science and Mathematics: -> table 1

In 2009, a set of recommendation were drafted by the National Knowledge Commission (NKC), to highlight the significance of talent development and to take necessary and immediate steps to attract good quality students in Science and Mathematics.

Though talent identification programmes have been running in the country for the past few decades, systematic processes of identification and nature of gifted students are in its infancy. The national curriculum framework (2005) mentioned the need of curriculum provisions for gifted students. Taking note of the necessity to identify real genius in Sciences and Mathematics, a national level project was initiated by the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India in the year 2010. Initially, the project started at three locations: in Delhi (in the capital city at the Cluster Innovation Centre, University Delhi), in Bangalore Urban city - at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) and in the rural part of the state of Karnataka by the Agastya International Foundation, Bangalore. The project at each location was carried out by three independent investigators. The population of each group was demographically different. Each project group developed an independent research design and methodology. Methods so adopted and results so derived were further tested by cross validation. The project at NIAS was carried out on the children upto 13-14 years of age and who were studying in schools across Bangalore. Classroom observations, nomination by teachers, the Raven Progressive Matrix and the Torrance Test of Creativity were some of the identification tools initially adopted by the NIAS project team. The project team at Agastya worked extensively with the NIAS team to develop the identification practices.

The Delhi project group developed a comprehensive and multi-tier process of identifying gifted students. The process consisting of a three stage protocol is called the Developmental Identification and Mentoring Process (DIMP). Salient

features of the DIMP are:

- The DIMP Identification process is a comprehensive, in-depth and multilayered procedure based on both test and non-test criteria.
- The detailed identification process is coherent, inclusive and child-centered.
- It considers "Mentoring" as an essential and critical component of the "Identification" process.
- The entire range of the assessment and identification process has been summed up as the **Developmental Identification and Mentoring Process**.
- It is age /grade specific and it can neutralize culture differences by gradually exposing children to high end learning experiences.
- It is a process of gathering information about gifted behaviors of children who have potentials and it believes that information gathering is a continuous process.

The DIMP methodology has been tried out on more than one million children from grade 6-8. The detailed identification process is spread across three stages. Each stage targets specific traits of the gifted population and a different set of identification tools are used in each stage. The blue print of the DIMP is as below: -> table 2

Only those students who are identified at the referral stage appear for the SMAT-Assessment and only those students who are selected through the SMAT-Assessment are considered for the Scaffolding stage. The Scaffolding stage consists of small group mentoring sessions. A well-designed mentoring programme has been developed for the selected students at the Cluster Innovation Centre, University of Delhi. Sessions under mentoring programmes are conducted during summer and winter school holidays. University teachers and scholars work as mentors for the students and design appropriate activities for them. The spread of activities include experiments, projects and problem solving. Students are exposed to new and unseen problems from the fields of the Sciences and Mathematics. Students work in small groups where mentors provide necessary guidance as and when require. Students are given the freedom to ask questions, read additional material and work beyond the

table 1

Schemes/Programs	Grade	Subject	Organizing Agency/Institute
National Talent Search Examination (NTSE)	Grade 10	One composite exam inclusive of all subjects taught in grade X (Math, Science, Social Science and language)	National Council of Teacher Education and Research Training (NCERT)
Olympiad Examination	Grade 9 onwards	Mathematics and Science subjects	Homi Bhabha Centre of Science Education (HBCSE)
Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana (KVPY)	Grade 11 to first year of undergraduate	Mathematics and Science subjects	Indian Institute of Science
Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)	Grade 6 onwards	Mathematics and Science subjects	Department of Science and Technology
Navodyaya Vidyalaya (Residential schools for rural children)	Grade 6 to grade 12	Regular school curriculum	Ministry of Human Resource Development

table 2

Stage	Identification method	Tools of identification	Identified gifted population
Referral stage	Nomination data from teachers, peers and self	1) Gifted Behavior Nomination Scale for Teachers 2) Gifted Behavior Nomination Scale for Students 3) Self -Expression: A Reflective Entry	Potentially gifted students
Selection stage	Ability testing on rubric based assessment criteria	SMAT-Assessment (Science and Mathematics Ability Test)	Significantly gifted students
Scaffolding stage	Small Group Mentoring	Observation schedules and assessment by the mentors	Highly gifted students

given context. Mentors and the research team continuously observe and assess students during the process of learning. Few of these students are recommended for advanced mentoring (one mentor - one mentee). Since 2013, 156 students have been invited for the mentoring programme at the Scaffolding stage and 16 students have been recommended for advanced mentoring.

The processes evolved in the project are robust and field tested. The identification norms are the globally accepted criteria of defining a gifted child. The context for identifying a gifted child can be customized to the learning environment of the child. The methods outlined in the DIMP are globally suited and can be adopted in any culture.

Preparing Teachers for Gifted Students

Under the mandate of the project, teachers' in-service programmes and professional development courses for the education of gifted students have been introduced.

At present, three programmes have been initiated: a one week long short term programme (in a workshop mode); a six months duration certificate course and a one year duration diploma course in the education of gifted students. The courses sensitize teachers to the learning needs of gifted students, equip them with strategies to identify gifted students and prepare them to create learning opportunities for gifted students in regular classrooms. Around 150 school teachers have attended short term in-service training programmes.

Early childhood identification of cognitively advanced learners

As an offshoot of the project, it was decided to explore the identification possibilities in early childhood years (3-7 years). An exhaustive method was developed to identify gifted children in the formative years of the cognitive development. The method of identification is based on the specially designed activity kit based on important cognitive milestones achieved by the child during the formative years. The

activity kit, titled Cognitive Developmental Milestones Kit (I & II), is a 'hands-on activity kit' designed for two stages: I & II. Stage I consists of cognitive tasks appropriate for children in the age group of 3-5 years. Stage II consists of cognitive tasks appropriate for children in the age group of 5-7 years. The kit has been validated on more than 3000 children and appropriate norms have been developed for the identification of cognitively advanced learners in the early childhood years.

Currently, the project has been carried out in different parts of the country to validate the methodology across a diverse population. It can be proposed or the national scale after comparable norms have been developed for a socially, economically, culturally and geographically diverse school going population.

'Quality education for all children' is the mandate of New India which is >>>

developing fast in all spheres of development. The New Education Policy is about to roll out in the next few months. High potential/ability learners have drawn considerable attention from all stakeholders. Efforts invested in the project are supporting the government's endeavour to raise the standards for all children and in particular for gifted learners. The outcome of the project has produced sufficient empirical evidences (which are also supported by theoretical considerations) to highlight the need of special educational provisions for gifted students. It will not take much time for the country to transfer it to the national level.

Acknowledgements:

Dr. R.Chidambaram, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India for his constant support and leadership in this endeavor; **Dr. Swati Basu**, Secretary, Office of Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India for her valuable insights and encouragement in taking the work forward; **Dr. Ketaki Bapat**, Senior Scientist and Project Office at Office of Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India for her time to time inputs, suggestions and for facilitating the administrative processes; **the Director**, Cluster Innovation Centre (CIC) and office staff at CIC for their help.

Jyoti Sharma, PhD, is an Associate Professor. She works as Principal Investigator in the Gifted Education Project and as a teaching faculty at the Cluster Innovation Centre at the University of Delhi

Bibu Biswal is a Professor at the Cluster Innovation Centre, University of Delhi. He works as a mentor in the Gifted Education Project

Pankaj Tygai, Ph.D, is a Professor at the Cluster Innovation Centre, University of Delhi. He works as a mentor in the Gifted Education Project

Shobha Bagai, Ph.D, is a Professor at the Cluster Innovation Centre, University of Delhi. She works as a mentor in the Gifted Education Project.

Contact: jyotisharmacic@gmail.com

A Profoundly Gifted Student's Journey Through Secondary School and Beyond

GRAEME MILLER, NEW ZEALAND

I first met Horatio (pseudonym) when, in 2009 he began his first year at high school, as a Year 9 student, in the school at which I taught. He had recently turned 13 years of age, which is the typical age most students begin high school in New Zealand as Year 9 students. In his school, the top four classes out of sixteen classes were streamed (ability grouped). The school was a state school for boys. In New Zealand, state boys' schools are consistently top achievers in the demanding first-year-university-level New Zealand Scholarship examinations. Horatio's school has for several years been the top performing school in his region in these examinations. As Dean of Advanced Learning Programmes, I oversaw his programmes at school as well as having the privilege of teaching him Social Studies for the first three months of his secondary schooling. In my view, Horatio is the most profoundly gifted student I have ever encountered in a teaching career of 44 years. Included amongst highly gifted students whom I have taught and/or mentored and/or whose programmes I have overseen are several who have placed first in the world in at least one subject in Cambridge International Examinations, and one who achieved this feat three times. In addition, several students have been amongst New Zealand's premier scholars i.e. in the top ten students in the country for overall academic achievement in the New Zealand Scholarship examinations, one of whom won the Prime Minister's Award as the top secondary school scholar in the country. In my view, Horatio is well above the intellectual level of any of them. Following, I outline the reasons I have come to that view.

When Horatio first arrived at his high school he was placed in the second-ranked class. I taught that class for Social Studies. On my second day teaching the class, Horatio first came to my attention. We had begun

to study the Cold War as a background to moving on to a study of the New Zealand Nuclear Protest Movement. I asked the class whether anyone knew how the Cold War came to an end. Horatio said that he did and explained how Gorbachev's policies of perestroika and glasnost were responsible. The other students, none of whom knew him, turned and looked at him in utter amazement. At that point I first wondered whether Horatio had been misplaced in his class and should have been in the top class. This was soon proved to be the case. During the three months Horatio was in my class, his formidable skills as a debater emerged. He had such a vast general knowledge and was so well reasoned that no-one could match him in debate. After watching him, I remarked to the teacher in charge of debating that I had found a formidable debater for his school teams of the future.

As Dean of Advanced Learning Programmes, I organised the school spelling bee¹ (individual competition). This is a comparatively new idea in New Zealand and does not have the long history or the years of intense competition of the American bee. Horatio enrolled to compete in the school bee, won it and then won the regional and national bees, all in the space of a month. He then went to the United States to the international bee two months later, placing 42nd, a remarkable result for someone for whom the bee was a side interest.

During Year 9, Horatio took up debating and was initially in the school's second junior team. He quickly developed his skills and by Year 10 was the leader of the first junior team. This team was undefeated in the region in 2010. I watched all the debates and checked the marking schedules of the adjudicators afterwards. The adjudicators always gave Horatio the award of best speaker or worst speaker, never in between. It was my view that the adjudicators who understood the quality

¹ <http://www.unfpa.org/swop-2014>

² <http://mhrd.gov.in/status>

³ <http://censusindia.gov.in/>

⁴ <http://yas.nic.in/sites/default/files/National-Youth-Policy-Documents.pdf>

⁵ <http://mhrd.gov.in/rte>

of his reasoning awarded him best speaker. Those without the intellectual capacity to follow his reasoning considered he was the worst. In Year 11 Horatio was a member of the first senior debating team and continued in that capacity in 2012. He was selected to represent his region in the national finals, while still in Year 11, a title won by his team. Horatio was adjudged most promising debater in the finals. He was again selected to represent his regional team in 2012 with his team retaining the national title.

As a result of the first round of testing of Year 9 students, Horatio moved to the top class in Year 9 after the first ten weeks of school. At the end of the year he won the award for top Year 9 student in the school, a feat he repeated again for his year level in Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12. He was favourite to become dux² in Year 13 but left school to attend university, initially enrolling at Auckland University for a Bachelor of Arts degree but moving to Harvard after the first semester.

In Year 9 Horatio, along with all other students in the top-band classes, completed an in-depth study, researching, completing a written dissertation and giving an oral presentation on a topic of his choice. Horatio did his study on persona psychology, constructing his own questionnaire, conducting an online questionnaire with a sample of 100 people and submitting a written dissertation of 31 000 words. He integrated the work of Freud on psychology with the sociological theories of Weber. His Social Studies teacher was amazed at the quality of his research dissertation and showed it to some postgraduate psychology students who considered the quality was at or beyond the level they were working at – and that was the work of a 13 year old! I showed some of Horatio's work to the Dean of the School of Education at the local university. He commented that Horatio was undoubtedly profoundly gifted and arranged the following year for Horatio to speak for one hour to a third-year university Education class about what had worked well for him in his schooling to date. The dean remarked that the students would be very unlikely to have ever come across someone as profoundly gifted as Horatio and as future teachers they needed to think through how they would manage

having a student such as him in their classes. In the course of his presentation, Horatio asked a question of the 50 or so students about the work of Weber. It appeared only one student had any idea what he was talking about. Following the presentation, which held the students in riveted attention, the dean and Horatio discussed their perspectives on the work of Foucault. Later the dean said of Horatio's presentation that it was "undoubtedly the highlight of the year for the students".

During Year 9, Horatio took Economics as a nine weeks option class. The teacher quickly realised the course content was inappropriate for Horatio when he wanted to discuss macroeconomics and John Maynard Keynes. He unofficially studied a paper in macroeconomics sourced through the Massachusetts Institute of Technology but was quite disappointed to find in a self-assessment of the paper that he was at the A- level. The next year Horatio was enrolled in New Zealand Scholarship Economics. The Head of Commerce considered Horatio was better at Economics than the student who had come first in the world in IGCSE Economics two years previously and therefore should miss all the normal progressions and go straight to the highest New Zealand secondary school qualification. Horatio beat the world's best in the Scholarship examination gaining an Outstanding Scholarship (top 0.3% in the country) and was the only Year 10 student in New Zealand to gain an Outstanding Scholarship in any subject.

Towards the end of Year 9 Horatio, along with the other top-band Year 9 students, completed a survey about the programme provided for them during the year. Although the students had been accelerated and ability grouped, this was not enough for Horatio's level of ability and he was critical of the lack of challenge he had received during the year. I was not sure how best to provide for his future intellectual needs so arranged for Horatio and his parents to meet with an educational psychologist. He assessed Horatio as being between first and second year university level in terms of his understanding of the concepts of psychology, philosophy, economics and history. In his view, academically Horatio could have coped with an immediate move to full-time university study. However, in discussion with the psychologist, the

school's headmaster, Horatio and his parents it was agreed it would be best for Horatio to remain at school and be provided with additional challenge in some subject areas.

At the end of Year 9 Horatio, without ever having been taught American History, took the SAT examination for entrance to university, gaining a score two standard deviations above the norm.

In Year 10 Horatio was placed on an Individualised Education Programme. He undertook English and History with his top Year 10 peers but studied Mathematics and Science with the top Year 11 classes and Economics with a Scholarship Year 13 class. In addition he studied two 100 Level university papers, Social and Moral Philosophy and Critical Reasoning, in both of which he gained an A+ grade. At the end of his Year 10 year, Horatio decided he would like to study French at university the following year. I phoned the head of French at the local university to discuss this with him. He sounded reluctant to approve an enrolment for a student who had not received any previous tuition in French and whose knowledge had been self-taught. I asked him not to make a decision until he had met Horatio, to which he agreed. I went with Horatio to the meeting with the head of French. They became engaged in a conversation about French literature as if they were colleagues rather than a teacher and student. I personally had no idea what they were talking about, having never read any of the literature they were discussing. After this, the head of French confidently agreed to approve enrolling Horatio and he gained an A+ for the paper.

In Year 11, in addition to taking French at university, Horatio studied English and History with his Year 11 peers. Although not studying the Scholarship English course (aimed at top Year 13 students) with the Scholarship class, Horatio attended out of class tutorials with the other students and gained an Outstanding Scholarship (top 0.3% in the country). He studied Chemistry, Mathematics and Classics with Year 12 students.

In Year 12, Horatio decided not to pursue any further university studies within New Zealand because he wanted to get the best possible school results as he considered this would be best to help him pursue his goal of enrolling as an undergraduate at an Ivy League University in the United States. Ivy League universities comprise eight prestigious private learning institutions in the Northeastern United States, considered to be amongst the world's top universities³. That year he studied Year 12 English for fun (as he already had the top qualification he could gain in a New Zealand secondary school) Scholarship and CIE AS Level History, Scholarship Classics, Scholarship and A Level French and Scholarship and CIE AS Level Chemistry. He placed first in the world in CIE AS History.

After completing his secondary schooling, Horatio initially attended Auckland University but moved to Harvard at the end of the first semester. Having never studied Japanese at school, at Harvard Horatio decided to study Japanese which he found totally absorbing. At the end of

his first year he was employed by Harvard as a researcher in Japanese history. For the second semester of Horatio's second year at Harvard he moved to Japan to enable him to study Japanese while immersed in Japanese culture. While there he was employed by an American legal firm as a researcher and translator. Horatio graduated after four years with a Bachelor of Arts. At this stage he is uncertain what future academic and/or career path he will follow. However, I am certain he will excel in whatever field he chooses to follow.

Horatio has a truly remarkable intellect and a passion for learning that goes beyond anything I have observed in any other student. All of the most advanced students I have encountered except for Horatio have been noted for their exceptional achievement in mathematics or the sciences. Horatio is remarkable for his exceptionally advanced knowledge and understanding of the humanities. It has been an immense privilege to have had a small part to play in his amazing learning journey.

Graeme Miller, PhD, is a New Zealand gifted education consultant and day-to-day relief teacher in both the primary and secondary school education sectors. His most recent permanent teaching position was as Dean of Advanced Learning Programmes in a large New Zealand secondary school from 2006 to 2013. Prior to that he was a primary school principal in five different schools over a period of 23 years.

Contact: millers@vodafone.net.nz

¹ 'Spelling bees' are competitions in spelling very difficult or exotic English words

² The dux is the top academic student of the graduating cohort at the end of secondary school.

³ The Ivy League is a collegiate athletic conference comprising sports teams from eight private institutions of higher education in the Northeastern United States. The conference name is also commonly used to refer to those eight schools as a group beyond the sports context. The eight institutions are Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth College, Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale. Ivy League schools are generally viewed as some of the most prestigious, and are ranked among the best universities worldwide by U.S. News & World Report. (source: Wikipedia)

Chess is a Child's Game

ANNETTE HEINBOKEL, GERMANY

Saskia Pohle attends a primary school in Saxony, Germany, where chess is taught in first grade to all the children for half a year. After the first few games Saskia was hooked: "Chess is my life. School is my hobby", she says. When she was 6 she became a member in the local chess club SV Muldental. Both her parents don't play chess, Saskia has not been able to interest them in the game. At first her mother tried to talk her out of it because she was also good at sports, but no way. "She was prepared to do without everything else, children's birthday parties, holidays, everything," her mother said.

Compared to other small chess clubs, the SC Muldental has professionalized the training. Compared to all the chess clubs in Saxony the club has not only the largest number of licensed coaches but also a special coaching programme developed by a grand master. The result is a number of excellent players, among them a 10-year old boy taking part in the European Championship.

When Saskia was seven, she played against one of the best under 10 boys in her club and won. Then she won in her age group in her state of Saxony, later in Germany. At the age of 10 she qualified for the World Championship that took place in Brazil in August 2017. She had hoped to be among the ten best, but was 25th among 57 participants. She won two and lost two

matches. When she analyzed where she had made a mistake, she was unhappy she hadn't noticed her mistake earlier. Her mother consoled her: "Aus Fehlern wird man klug, drum ist einer nicht genug", which rhymes in German: You learn from mistakes, therefore one is not enough.

Information gained from several newspaper articles and websites, among them <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/weltspiegel/junges-genie-aus-sachsen-neunjaehrige-aus-zwickau-faehrt-zur-schach-wm/20211000.html>

<https://www.freiepresse.de/LOKALES/ZWICKAU/GLAUCHAU/Suess-aergerlich-freundlich-Was-Saskia-in-Brasilien-erlebt-artikel9984644.php>

Comment

Saskia is typical for some gifted children: they push their parents, not the other way round. Of course there are quite a few parents who push their children, whether they are gifted or not. From outside the family it's not always easy to see who is the doing the pushing. As the achievements of very young gifted children are often amazing, whatever their field of interest or ability – and there are more overambitious parents than there are gifted children – people without knowledge of giftedness often assume the children have been pushed. If lay persons think that way it's understandable, but the main experts, the teachers, should know better and take a very good look before making their judgement.

Ellen Winner (1996) names three points to explain giftedness:

- Precocity: they take their first steps in the domain they later master earlier than average children
- They are marching to their own drummer
- A rage to master

Saskia Pohle definitely fits into those categories.

The very early interest in a subject does not automatically mean someone will become a master in her / his field as an adult. Not every 7-year old expert in dinosaurs or excellent football player will be an adult dinosaur expert or world class football player. However, the other way round it works: most of the world renowned musicians, painters, sportsmen, inventors started very early. Besides we gifted experts know: to achieve excellence, 10.000 hours of practice are necessary, and that takes years. Don't give up hope, though, there are also examples of very late bloomers. Grandma Moses (1860-1961) started painting in earnest when she was 75.

Annette Heinbokel, editor of ECHA News

Contact: annette.heinboken@swbmail.de

REFERENCES

Winner, Ellen (1996). *Gifted Children. Myths and Realities*, Harper Collins, New York