

Gifted Voice Newsletter Spring, 2005

Giftedness and Enhanced Creativity

(excerpt from Ways to Enhance Creativity: A Different Approach by Jane Piirto)

Highly creative people do things in these categories:

- they seem to have rituals; for example, they like to walk;
- they crave silence;
- they go to retreats and colonies;
- they are inspired by travel;
- they use imagination;
- they trust their dreams;
- they seek solitude so they may go into a state of reverie (or flow);
- they fast;
- they meditate;
- they get inspiration from the muse;
- they are inspired by others' works of art, science, and music;
- they improvise;
- if they are blocked, they read or write self-help books.

Piirto's Full Article: http://www.giftedbooks.com/aart_piirto.html

Myths About Giftedness

(by Otto Schmidt, Gifted Programming Consultant, Toronto, Canada)

These myths would never be applied to a superstar athlete. Why would anybody say them about gifted children?

Myth: Gifted children are so smart that they don't need help in their learning.

Everyone needs help at some time, even gifted kids. We all need encouragement, motivation, interesting learning and caring people in our lives. At any age, we all still have lots to learn. Being gifted is sometimes a real burden for children especially when they haven't learned the essential skills of how to learn. They may lack social skills as well. Being given things to learn and being taught how to learn are two very different concepts.

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Myth: Gifted children miss out when they leave their regular classroom for their special classes or go to meet a facilitator.

Most gifted children can process information much faster and to a greater depth than other students. For many, missing out on a lesson is perhaps a minor inconvenience. They get caught up later. Usually, very little is lost. The amount of time away from regular classes can become an issue when lessons are not reviewed or not even mentioned to the students when they return to class.

Myth: Special programs for gifted children are elitist.

Don't we do the same thing for talented musicians and athletes? Many teachers group their students for certain classroom activities. Gifted children need to see that they are not alone. Many can relate well to

peers who are less able, but shouldn't they also experience the challenge of relating to other exceptional learners like themselves? They need to share experiences and work with others who are perhaps even more intelligent. Eliminating special programming would deny their differences and suggest that all people should conform to a norm. Try that with a star basketball player!

Myth: *Gifted children get stuck up and then have trouble getting along with peers.*

It may be surprising that many gifted children find it difficult to be gifted in their schools. Rather than flaunting their intelligence, some try to hide as best they can. Peers call them names – giffers, brainers, gifties, etc. There is stereotyping to contend with. Some people can't even say "gifted" without a negative tone of voice. Interacting with people far below or above one's own level of intelligence or maturity can be as great a challenge to adults as it is for gifted children.

Myth: *Everyone is gifted.*

Many people are skilled and able. Some people, however, do stand out. Why? Because they can do things far better than others. This is where gifted people fit in. Is every science student going to become an Einstein? No. Will all people become masters and famous at something? No. Many ordinary people will always do things in ordinary ways. Let us cherish and nurture the ones whose gifts are greater. They have a greater chance of being our great leaders, musicians, inventors, humanists, writers, adventurers and others. Most of us will never be able to achieve at that level. But there are some gifted people that can! Shouldn't we be nurturing them?

Myth: All children deserve the same learning as gifted children get.

Yes! Very true. But gifted children do not deserve only what all children get. The skills and concepts in gifted education can be provided to everybody. Average children, however, often cannot handle the greater learning load or the speed at which the teaching or learning goes on. The intention of gifted programming is to simply meet the higher level of needs of highly intelligent children, not provide something elitist or exclusive to them.

Is Your Child Gifted or Stricken with ADD?

(from Kidsource.com)

Some really bright children are getting medicated for ADD instead of being identified as gifted! Believe it or not, there is actually a high risk of that happening. Some of the following are common to both:

- underachieving in many areas of life
- disorganized daily routines
- sloppy work that is rushed and/or poorly done
- handwriting that is difficult to read
- self-centered and individualistic attitude
- difficulty in conforming to societal norms
- stubborn and persistent in getting his/her own way
- noticeable mood changes and swings
- a kind of "spacey" look about them, not quite connected
- lack of attention to details, emphasis is on the big picture
- lots of energy and always on the go
- can be very intense and has strong ability to concentrate
- moving constantly and fidgeting about
- impulsive and shows lack of forethought
- forgetful, absentminded, daydreams
- angers and gets frustrated easily
- easily upset and emotional

Misdiagnosis can be prevented:

- parents need to thoroughly understand giftedness and ADD
- people need to stop stereotyping the behaviors of gifted children
- determine if it is a quick, alert mind that understands far more quickly than others
- note that gifted boys are being diagnosed with ADD more than girls
- acknowledge that gifted people often see things very differently from a visual and spatial point of view
- study the processes of "right brain" and "left brain" thinking
- become aware of the different emotional, mental and physical difficulties that gifted children/adults can have

Possible solutions when a gifted child's needs are not being met and difficulties arise in school:

- home schooling
- alternative schools
- mentorships/co-operative learning/apprenticeships
- skipping grades/accelerated learning
- teach more competency/survival skills as opposed to gathering knowledge and facts

Preparing Gifted Children to Choose a College/University

(by Otto Schmidt, Gifted Programming Consultant, Toronto, Canada)

Gr. 7-8: Many gifted children will be mature enough to actively explore for and consider a career. Emphasis at these grade levels should be on self-awareness, time management skills, leadership development, decision making, goal setting and honing work/study skills. Having a look at what universities offer may also be an enjoyable activity.

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Gr. 9-10: Students should consider various kinds of enrichment and credits that relate to choosing a future college/university. Some of the most popular are:

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Advanced Placement Courses offer great challenges and expose gifted children to university level learning (with a full credit) and new areas of interest not provided in high school. They offer great challenges and expose gifted children to university level learning (with a full credit) and new areas of interest not provided in high school.

University Open Houses. Most universities have a special day on which the public is invited to tour their campus. See the departments and explore for interests and contacts. Most universities have a special day on which the public is invited to tour their campus. See the departments and explore for interests and contacts.

Special Enrichment Opportunities. The one-week, exciting Queen's University Mini-Enrichment Program in Kingston, Ontario, for example, is invaluable in giving students a taste of university life. McMaster University, in Hamilton, Ontario has an excellent week-end mini-enrichment program. University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, offers Summer and Fall mentorship programs where children can work with experts in many fields of study. The one-week, exciting Queen's University Mini-Enrichment Program in Kingston, Ontario, for example, is invaluable in giving students a taste of university life. McMaster University, in Hamilton, Ontario has an excellent week-end mini-enrichment program. University of

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Summer Camps at Universities. The University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario offers summer computing and engineering courses for high school students. Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario offers special physics and space-related courses.

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Leadership Training at summer camps, and offered by such organizations as the Rotary Club, Conference on Human Rights, Model U.N., Camp Enterprise.
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Gr. 11-12: Emphasis should be on the practical aspects of the processes of applying to universities, exposure to occupations and job internships, visits to companies and universities, involvement in university mentorship programs, and co-operative learning placements.

Mind-Stretching Websites:

Dante Bini (amazing architect who specializes in revolutionary construction methods)<http://www.binisystems.com/>

Discovery Channel Extreme Engineering (astounding projects in the world)
<http://www.discoverychannel.co.uk/extremeengineering/home.shtml>

Entelechy (exploring the potential to be all that you can be)
<http://laetusinpraesens.org/docs/present/present3.php>

Found Magazine (a guy finds & collects strange bits of paper) <http://www.foundmagazine.com>

History of Psychology in a Timeline (hundreds of philosophers, events, books, etc.)
http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/6061/en_linha.htm

Hot Air "Ig-Nobel Prizes" from the Annals of Improbable Research (ideas that make you laugh but then force you to think) <http://www.improb.com/>

Mind Glitter (e-zine reveals talent of junior-high to college-age writers & artists)
<http://www.mindglitter.com>

Near Death Experiences Support Group (is there life after death?) <http://www.near-death.com/>

Online Games for the Blind (amazing area to stimulate creativity) <http://www.gamesfortheblind.com/>

Reconstructors (travel into the future to solve medicinal mysteries of the past)
<http://reconstructors.rice.edu/recon1/index.html>

Team Building & Working Collaboratively (powerful methods that help you work better in a group)
<http://www.vta.spcomm.uiuc.edu/>

World Famous People (real life people and their incredible stories!!) <http://www.world-famous.com>

Top Ten Books on Giftedness

Selected by Noreen H. Joslyn, LISW, ACSW From: <http://www.familyeducation.com/article/0,1120,59-24383,00.html>

- 1. *Bringing Out the Best: A Resource Guide for Parents of Young Gifted Children*** by Jacquelyn Saunders with Pamela Espelund. Free Spirit Publishing. A highly practical book. Gives suggestions for enriching home learning plus advice on choosing preschools.
- 2. *The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids*** by Sally Y. Walker. Free Spirit Publishing. Good advice written with a sense of humor. I've read it many times over!
- 3. *The Gifted Kids Survival Guide: For Ages 10 and Under*** by Judy Galbraith. Free Spirit Publishing. Written for the younger gifted student, this helpful book explains giftedness clearly. Gives many suggestions to help make the school experience more positive.
- 4. *The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook*** by Judy Galbraith and Jim Delisle, PhD. Free Spirit Publishing. Recently updated, this valuable book covers topics such as how to relate with peers, devising your own curriculum, and college planning. An important chapter covers depression and suicide risks. My own kids have read this.
- 5. *Keys to Parenting the Gifted Child*** by Sylvia Rimm, PhD. Barron's Publishing. Part of the Barron's Parenting Keys Series, this helpful book examines questions many parents of gifted children have, such as when to start school, grade-skipping, and homework habits. Very readable.
- 6. *Perfectionism: What's Bad About Being Too Good?*** By Miriam Adderholdt-Elliot, PhD. Free Spirit Publishing. The title says it all. Though directed towards any perfectionist you know -- older middle-school age and up -- this book will also help parents understand and cope with their own gifted perfectionist child.
- 7. *The Roller-Coaster Years: Raising Your Child through the Maddening yet Magical Middle School Years*** by Charlene Gianetti and Margaret Sagarese. Broadway Books. Though not written specifically for parents of gifted kids, this is a very helpful book for parents of an often overlooked age group. There is also a comprehensive list of resources for every chapter!
- 8. *College Planning for Gifted Students*** by Sandra L. Berger. The Council for Exceptional Children. A book that takes you from choosing middle-school courses to the college-application process. Recently updated, it also includes data on gifted-teen summer programs and state gifted associations.
- 9. *The Over-Scheduled Child: Avoiding the Hyper-Parenting Trap*** by Alvin Rosenfeld, MD and Nicole Wise. St. Martin's Griffin Press. Gifted kids often want to put themselves in too many activities. Though not specifically directed at parents of gifted, this book examines this concern and makes recommendations for putting on the brakes.
- 10. *The Gifted Adult: A Revolutionary Guide for Liberating Everyday Genius*** by Mary-Elaine Jacobsen, PsyD. Ballentine Books. You didn't think you stopped being gifted when you grew up, did you? Insightful writing examines issues that gifted adults may face if they don't successfully incorporate their "differentness" into their personality. Since many parents of gifted kids are gifted themselves, this book is highly recommended.

Wise Words About Intelligence

Play is the only way the highest intelligence of humankind can unfold. - Joseph Chilton Pearce

Lack of willpower has caused more failure than lack of intelligence or ability. – anonymous

There are no such things as limits to growth, because there are no limits to the human capacity for intelligence, imagination, and wonder. - Ronald Regan

We are faced with the paradoxical fact that education has become one of the chief obstacles to intelligence and freedom of thought. - Bertrand Russell

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically... Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education. - Martin Luther King
