Dear WCGTC Members,

We are a little more than six months away from the World Conference that will be held in Nashville July 24-28. I certainly hope you will be able to join others in this opportunity to network and learn together.

In August, Tyler Clark and I participated in two conferences to share information about the opportunities to be offered at the 23rd World Conference for the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children – opportunities to learn, present, and host an exhibit. The European Council for High Ability in Dublin, Ireland, and the Asia Pacific Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, provided great times to network and engage with colleagues interested in providing appropriate learning opportunities for gifted and talented children. In November, we had an exhibit at the National Association for Gifted Children convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. All three conferences were wonderful times of sharing and learning together.

In addition to offering a world conference every other year, the WCGTC publishes a journal Gifted and Talented International and the World Gifted Newsletter. The journal offers an important platform for disseminating research, and the newsletter allows members to share information about what is current in gifted education in their countries. I hope you will avail yourself of opportunities to learn about fellow members in these publications.

I welcome your comments and suggestions for our organization. Let’s work together to make the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children relevant in our world today.

Sincerely,

Julia Link Roberts, EdD
President, World Council
Mahurin Professor of Gifted Studies
WCGTC Headquarters Update

Worldwide Advocacy for Our Gifted Children

The mission of the WCGTC, as outlined in the Bylaws, is “to focus world attention on gifted and talented children and ensure the realization of their valuable potential to the benefit of humankind.” This newsletter is one way we meet our mission. A huge thank you to the Delegates from 15 countries who have prepared reports for this issue of the World Gifted newsletter. These reports help us know about new initiatives in other areas and how we might apply them in our own setting. I am so impressed by the diligent work our members are doing to help gifted children around the world.

Our journal, Gifted and Talented International (GTI), is another way we disseminate information about gifted children. Volume 32, Issue 2 will soon be mailed to members. Thank you to twelve authors for preparing manuscripts. A huge thank you also goes to our Co-Editors (Leonie Kronborg and Megan Foley-Nicpon), our Associate Editors (Barbara Kerr, June Maker, Nielsen Pereira, Franzis Preckel, and Ann Robinson) as well as the many reviewers who help make this publication possible. The entire archives of GTI are available online to all members.

The World Conference is another important way for us to meet our mission. We are very excited to host the 23rd World Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, USA during July 24 – 28, 2019. We welcome you to Music City where we will have eight preconference workshops; six keynote sessions; many parallel sessions, symposia, and poster presentations; and a conference dinner that will include line dance lessons. We are still accepting applications for a scholarship to attend the World Conference. Graduate students may apply before February 15 by visiting world-gifted.org/scholarship. You may also nominate someone for an award at http://world-gifted.org/awards-nomination.

It will soon be time to begin the election process for Executive Committee members as the terms of three members expire. Afterwards, Delegate elections will be held. A call for nominations will be sent soon. As always, thank you for all you do to make the WCGTC a better organization. I look forward to working with you in 2019 and welcome your ideas for furthering the organization.

Friends of the WCGTC

We would like to express our gratitude to the following individuals for recently giving to the WCGTC scholarship fund either directly or through purchasing a silver, gold, or platinum membership. These donations make it possible to provide more opportunities to interested individuals around the globe to join us at the World Conferences. For more information about giving to the scholarship fund, visit www.world-gifted.org/give.

- Tyler Clark (United States)
- Nancy Dinar (Indonesia)
- Susan Knopfelmacher (Australia)
- Carmel Meehan (Australia)
- Susan Nikakis (Australia)
- Bruce Riegel (United States)
- Julia Roberts (United States)
- Fiona Smith (Australia)
- Kyoko Taguchi (Japan)
- Frank Worrell (United States)
Congratulations to Centro Huerta del Rey on celebrating 30 years. We thank you for hosting the 14th World Conference in Barcelona in 2001 and for your continued support of the WCGTC!

See you in Nashville July 24-28, 2019!
Delegate Discourse

AUSTRALIA

The Australian Association for the Education of Gifted and Talented (AAEGT) Annual General Meeting was held in Adelaide in September, coinciding with the Gifted Education Research Colloquium hosted by Flinders University. Under President Lesley Henderson, a new AAEGT Constitution has been developed which will result in the review of current policies and guidelines and the development of new position papers.

National Gifted Awareness Week (GAW) will be held March 17 – 24, 2019. GAW focuses on raising the agenda of gifted education and the theme for 2019 is centered around “belonging.” To kick off community involvement in GAW2019, AAEGT is looking for individuals from each state organisation to register to be part of an initial “Get involved” meeting to open the conversations around GAW2019.

Individual states and territories also had a lot of activity during 2018 as outlined in the following brief snippets:

The Association for Gifted and Talented Education Victoria (AGATEVic) has continued to provide high quality professional learning through Professional Development seminars and research paper presentations. Topics included: Is acceleration the best answer for gifted children?; To accelerate or not: Negotiating the secondary maths curriculum with mathematically able females; How do girls know they are smart? Sources of academic self-efficacy in high achieving females; Gifted students on the autism spectrum, an introduction; and Effective mentoring for gifted students: Student research projects and extended investigations.

For details visit: https://sites.google.com/agatevic.org/website/home.

Gifted students have also taken part in several philosophical Communities of Inquiry and Philosothons organized through the Gifted and Extension Program at Presbyterian Ladies’ College in conjunction with statewide associations.

The Victorian Association for Gifted and Talented (VAGT) with support from the Department of Education and Training (DET) targeted some of the most disengaged areas of regional Victoria with their continued delivery of rural seminars for parents and teachers. Throughout 2018, a range of activities were supported by the VAGTC including a conference on Models of Talent Development; three educator workshops; a four-part Twilight Seminar Series for Educators; and a range of workshops and seminars for students including the Naturalists Conference for Students at Healesville Sanctuary, the MLC Neuroscience Student Conference, and a full day Philosothon Day, engaging a collective total of over 1,000 students from across Victoria.

The ACT Gifted Families Support Group has had a productive year supporting families through hosting guest speakers, meeting with ACT Education Directorate representatives, and sharing knowledge through dinners, our Facebook pages, and the creation of a new website, www.actgifted.com.au.

NSW Gifted Families Support Group Inc. has been very productive working with GERRIC, the University of NSW, University of Wollongong, Mind Camp, Think Club, Teacher’s Guild of NSW, Australian Gifted Supported Centre, and the NSW Department of Education, as well as with Catholic, independent, and public schools across NSW. In 2019, GFSG Inc. will again collaborate with the Teachers’ Guild of NSW to co-host the 2nd Biennial Gifted Awareness Forum for Educators (GAFE) during Gifted Awareness Week (GAW) in March 2019 when Dr. Lannie Kanevsky will be presenting.

Gifted and Talented Children’s Association of South Australia (GTCASA) held 101 events in 2018 consisting of 64 Saturday Club sessions, 36 Youth Workshop sessions, and one professional development workshop. The Department for Education supported activities including Saturday Club and Youth Workshops.

Gifted Western Australia (GiftedWA) recently held a strategic planning day and is growing its membership and experiencing strong attendance at all events including a Children’s Entrepreneur Workshop. Details can be found at www.giftedwa.org.au.

The Tasmanian Association for Gifted (TAG) held information sessions on Matching the pace of learning to the child’s needs, Early entry to kinder, Passion projects: Negotiated inquiry learning for gifted students, and Anxiety and gifted children. TAG is delighted to congratulate Dr. Amanda Harper for being awarded the AAEGT, John Geake Outstanding Thesis Award for 2018 for her PhD thesis, Paving the practical pathway: The place of gifted education pedagogy in undergraduate clinical skills education in Australia.
The VIII National Conference of the Brazilian Council for Giftedness (ConBraSD) and the III International Congress on High Ability/Giftedness were held October 25–27, 2018 in Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul. The event was attended by professionals from the educational field, psychologists, researchers, undergraduate and graduate students, and families from around the country. Campo Grande is a Brazilian municipality located in the Midwest region with a population of more than 800,000 inhabitants.

The main purpose of the conference was to disseminate knowledge of high ability/giftedness to enable professionals to improve their actions towards high ability and gifted students. The main theme of the event was the Multidimensionality of Giftedness, and the keynote speakers highlighted issues related to educational policies for gifted students, identification, socio-emotional aspects of giftedness, creativity, and family services, among other topics.

Along with national speakers, the event was attended by international guests, including Dr. Paula Irueste (Universidad de Córdoba, Argentina), Dr. Susana Graciela Pérez Barrera (Universidad de la Empresa, Uruguay), and Dr. Nielsen Pereira (Purdue University, United States), who addressed the theme of High Ability/Giftedness in North and South America. In addition, Dr. Joseph Renzulli (University of Connecticut, United States) gave a lecture through videoconference entitled Identifying and Developing Creative and Productive Giftedness: Important Challenges for 21st Century Learners.

At this conference, the new executive committee of ConBraSD was elected. We now have Angela Virgolim as president, Vera Lúcia Palmeira Pereira as vice president, Karina Paludo and Maria Lúcia Prado Sabatella as secretaries, and Jane Farias Chagas Ferreira and Denise Maria de Matos Pereira Lima as treasurers.

Another event related to High Ability/Giftedness, the Cycle of Lectures for Parents, took place in Brasília, Brazil. Denise Fleith and Maria Cristiana Aspesi coordinated this project. During 2018, there were five meetings with different guests who spoke to parents of gifted children about important aspects of the development and learning process of their children. On October 4, Maria Lúcia Sabatella, one of the WCGTC Delegates from Brazil, gave a lecture on What Practice Teaches Us. Her talk was inspiring and very well received by the parents who were present at the event.

On November 21, the results of the 14th Brazilian Mathematical Olympiad were announced. A national project aimed at public and private Brazilian schools, the competition is organized by the Institute of Pure and Applied Mathematics (IMPA) and promoted with federal public resources, with the support of the Brazilian Society of Mathematics (SBM). The purpose of the Olympiad is to stimulate the study of mathematics, to reveal talents (thereby encouraging their entry into scientific and technological areas), and to promote social inclusion through the diffusion of knowledge. It is the largest student competition in Brazil, with 18.2 million participants from 54,498 public and private institutions.

Submitted by Daniela Vilarinho Rezende (dvilarinho.rezende@gmail.com) and Jane Farias Chagas Ferreira (janefcha@gmail.com)

In Canada, there are no Canadian Standards for gifted education. Some provinces have guidelines, but not all do. This lack of standardization can be a problem, but it also gives a lot of opportunities to develop innovative regional and local projects in gifted education.

In Alberta, “the Standards for Special Education, amended June 2004 requires school boards to identify and deliver effective programming for students with special education needs in K-12... Alberta Learning acknowledges the importance of local autonomy, flexibility and choice in meeting the diverse learning needs of students” (Gifted and Talented Education Parent Association, 2018 GATE Calgary).

In British-Columbia, “They are in the process of implementing a broadly re-designed, competency-based curriculum in all grades. It has very ‘broad walls and high ceilings’ and so has great potential for high ability learners... One feature of the new curriculum is its focus on personalized learning. This is a tremendous opportunity for all learners to take increasing responsibility for their learning and to enhance intrinsic
motivation. Informally, we’re seeing marvelous uptake by gifted students when the limits on their learning are removed” (Lannie Kanevsky, associate professor, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University).

In Manitoba at the University of Winnipeg, they are “Mobilizing Knowledge for Talent Development: ‘Of late, the term ‘knowledge mobilization’ – loosely defined as transferring knowledge from the realm of research and applying it in pragmatic fashion to help tackle real-life problems – has become increasingly popular. The fact is, however, that many re-searchers and practitioners in gifted education have been connecting theory, research, and practice in authentic ways for decades in an effort to develop meaningful policy, enrich pedagogy, and make a tangible difference in the lives of children and youth. And since the mid-1980s, faculty members in education at the University of Winnipeg have collaborated with partners in the schools to more effectively meet the needs of high-ability students (Ken W. McCluskey, University of Winnipeg).

In Ontario, parents’ bid for more access to special classes for gifted kids was put on hold: “The controversial motion from trustee Christine Boothby was aimed at giving parents more control in the decision to place their gifted children into specialized classes. However, board officials said the idea might violate provincial regulations that give school-based committees the legal right to determine when students are placed. Boothby, supported by many parents of gifted students, said she was concerned about the rapid decline of the number of congregated gifted classes. Students with special-education exceptionalities must start out in a regular classroom before placed in a congregated class. Boothby’s motion would have allowed gifted students to skip that step, which was controversial among some parents who have children with other special-education needs, such as learning disabilities, autism and developmental delays” (Jacquie Miller, Ottawa Citizen, October 30, 2018).

In Quebec, education projects in the gifted field are developing in different areas: acceleration opportunities, leadership, enrichment, language immersion, robotics, etc. What exists in each community depends on school decisions or school board attitudes. Progress to ensure schools are meeting the needs of gifted students is slowly emerging. The main challenge is still the lack of professional training in gifted education and in gifted psychological identification and intervention.

In Canada, different kinds of gifted programs are offered specifically in private schools. Some are dedicated gifted schools and most have dedicated gifted classes. The latter can provide two, three, or four gifted programs and extracurricular opportunities at a single school.

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<th>Programs</th>
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<td>SE: Subject-enrichment</td>
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<td>IS: Guided independent study</td>
<td>CL: Cyber-learning</td>
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<td>AC: Accelerated pace</td>
<td>LI: Language immersion</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP: Advanced Placement</td>
<td>IB: International Baccalaureate</td>
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<td>SN: Special needs and LD support</td>
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The most popular programs are SE, CC, and CL in Alberta; SE and LI in Quebec; SE and CC in the Maritimes; SE, AP, IS, and AC in B-C; and AC, SE, and IS in Ontario.

In public schools, there are international programs and a few dedicated classes in giftedness. Gifted students can accelerate in some provinces and cannot in other; there is still a lot of resistance toward acceleration.

Submitted by Andrée Therrien (ataclinique@hotmail.com)

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Association for Talent and Giftedness (STaN) was established in 1988. During the past 30 years, we have gathered many case studies. Some of them are very serious stories of highly intelligent children who have experienced challenges related to their education. Often their parents were the only individuals who believed they could be gifted. In fact, other people believed such children were mentally handicapped and/or mentally ill. We have many other stories, not as drastic, but just as serious for gifted children.

There is still a lack of information not only among the general public but also among many teachers, medical doctors, and even psychologists who have no idea about the special needs of children who are far from average. There are many “normal” children who have huge problems. This reality makes it necessary to inform the general public and to educate specialists. To do so, STaN will host an international conference in Prague August 21–24, 2019. The conference will focus on practice and will include teachers, psychologists, parents of gifted children, and other people interested in good practice in gifted education.

Submitted by Eva Vondráková (vondrakova@gmail.com)
At the time of writing, I am sad to report that Greece has made no satisfactory advancement in the field of gifted and talented education since my last bulletin. It is still in a beginning state, so it is difficult for children who are highly gifted to obtain the help and education they deserve.

There are no opportunities for gifted children in mainstream education at present, although Athens University is continuing research to discover how these talented youngsters can best be helped and encouraged, as well how to improve on their learning outcomes. Achieving this result will entail more than just the cooperation of the government and private institutions. Family members, schools, local authorities, universities, educators, students and perhaps some non-governmental organizations will all need to be involved in creating an educational environment that is suitable for the needs of these children.

Notwithstanding the fact that the focus needs to shift towards the training of future teachers to satisfy the needs of these special children, gifted education should still be readily available in regular classrooms, in addition to supplemental extra-curricular options or activities. Underserving gifted pupils leads to their underachievement as their motivation decreases with each passing term. The educational system in Greece should recognize and appreciate these students by demonstrating different learning architectures and environments through personalized learning and comprehensive mentoring systems.

Established in 2003, the Hellenic Society for the Educational Provision for Creative/Gifted/Talented Children and Adolescents (Δη. Χα. Τα. Π.Ε.) is actively involved through numerous research activities and initiatives in “making Greek society aware of and sensitive to the particular characteristics of Creative, Gifted and Talented children and adolescents during all stages of their development.”

Anatolia College, the American school in Thessaloniki, in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University, operates the Center for Charismatic-Talented Children, CTY Greece. Anatolia College is currently conducting, throughout Greece and Cyprus, the SCAT and STB tests, which are designed and rated by Johns Hopkins University’s Center for Talented Youth (CTY) for students willing to attend the CTY Greece summer program.

Byron College, the British international school in Athens, has a fledgling extra-curricular program (GATE) for its students who are identified as gifted and talented. It is using, among others, the Raven-CPM and WISC-V tests for GT identification, maintains a GT register as required by the British DoE, and it is utilizing its own resources to facilitate the learning of these students.

Other private initiatives, mainly focused on identifying GT children, are also underway in Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patras, though all are still in their infancy (i.e., Mensa, Charismatheia, Aristoteles).

At present, it is indeed a challenge to train teachers and school leaders in the field of gifted education and augment the quality and effectiveness of teaching to improve the quality of learning among these special needs pupils. Yet it should be remembered that it is also the responsibility of the government to formulate and implement a policy that embraces all students of diverse needs rather than just those to whom they cater to at present, most notably disabled children. After all, a government has a duty to develop a strategy for the enhancement of education within its borders that encompasses the interests and expectations of all.

Currently, due to the ongoing financial crisis and lack of opportunities in this country, many highly educated young people leave Greece to find employment abroad – the “brain drain.” I believe that the solutions to Greece’s economic challenges, both now and in the future, lie in developing the high-ability students and children who are waiting to be helped. We are squandering their contributions to our economic growth and stability because few people realize they are there. Many of the children themselves are not aware of what they can achieve, and they are a vast, untapped resource. My hope is that good, pedagogically innovative programs will become a reality in Greece in the near future and that no child will be excluded or forgotten and will thus be able to achieve and demonstrate his or her full potential.

Submitted by Konstantinos Koutsantonis (k.koutsantonis@newal.gr)
We are pleased to provide our 2018 annual report on gifted education in Israel, highlighting (1) the Future Scientists Center “Idea” program for gifted students; (2) Israel science olympiad teams for gifted and talented students; and (3) updates on the 2018 leading activities of the Ministry of Education, the Division for Gifted and Outstanding Students.

The Maimonides Fund’s Center for the Advancement of the Gifted and Talented was established in 2016 to provide gifted and talented students with significant opportunities through their participation in high-quality academic programs. The center’s activities are all joint initiatives shared with the Israeli Ministry of Education. In the current year the center’s new programs include Idea, a research program in the humanities and social sciences for 10-11th graders; and Israel science olympiad teams — informatics, mathematics, chemistry, and physics teams, along with a new junior team for middle school gifted and talented students in science and mathematics.

The Idea Program was developed for high school gifted students who show interest and curiosity in the humanities. The program exposes gifted students to high-level academic research work with opportunities to apply their research skills, to develop critical thinking, to read and write at a high level, and to conduct research in the humanities. The program fosters a better understanding of the complexity of historical-social, political, and cultural processes while creatively dealing with past and present problems. In addition to being exposed to various fields of knowledge, students participate in academic seminars that include theoretical research in areas they have chosen to study in depth and study research methodologies. Idea offers participants a significant intellectual experience combined with social and emotional support and an opportunity to meet with peers from all over the country.

Starting this year, the Future Scientists Center oversees the preparing and training of the Israeli science Olympiad teams. Israel takes part in four of the Unesco Olympiads (IOs): chemistry, informatics, mathematics, and physics. The Olympiads help develop extraordinary talent in specific academic areas, build self-confidence, and foster students’ becoming more self-directed. Students also have an opportunity to meet other students from around the world and form a community of young scientists. As part of the new plan for preparing the national teams, the Future Scientists Center and the Ministry of Education initiated a junior team for middle school gifted and talented students. Each year, 100 students will participate in the junior science team.

The development plan for the next five years for the Department of Gifted and Talented Education in the Ministry of Education was approved and budgeted. Thus, more gifted students throughout the country will benefit from its services. More gifted and talented students (up to three percent of the cohort) will be identified as being gifted, and more students will participate in specialized gifted and talented educational programs in and outside of school.

Starting this year, the Division of Gifted and Outstanding Students began implementing the teaching of gifted students using what is considered best practice for gifted student learning in a regular mixed-ability classroom. The program includes teachers’ professional development courses and nominating a school integration coordinator. The coordinator’s responsibility is to ensure that gifted students and other special groups of students will follow an adapted, enhanced curriculum that will help them maximize their abilities. In addition, the program provides the school with resources for individual instruction as well as social and emotional guidance.

The pedagogic laboratory settings involve applying educational theoretical knowledge and teaching practice knowledge as well as knowledge about teaching gifted students in specialized classes and the regular classroom. It allows schools to make the shift from theoretical knowledge to applying knowledge regarding gifted and talented students, and it fosters the assimilation of knowledge through repetition. In 2018, the department established new programs that focus on a specialized program for gifted students and established five programs for gifted students’ learning in a regular mixed-ability classroom.

The division established professional development courses in five leading universities in Israel. The 240 hour course is mandatory for teachers who teach in a specialized gifted class. The courses help in transforming the learning environment in the schools to one that fosters a positive attitude toward talented students.

Submitted by Naama Benny (benny9@bezeqint.net)
During 2018, the field of gifted education has expanded in Mexico due to a series of improvements that have resulted in an increase of social awareness. This year, Mexico City’s highest award for young people (under 30 years old) was given to a student who finished her Master’s degree at the age of sixteen. This is the first time Mexican authorities have officially recognized a student that was accelerated in school. Previously, the government’s attitude toward strategies that fast-track gifted students and allow them to pursue studies at a faster rate was uncertain. In August 2018 its position was clarified when the mayor of Mexico City awarded this prize to a gifted student who had been accelerated throughout her academic career. The award acknowledged her “outstanding academic trajectory which inspires the community.”

The Mexican Alliance for Giftedness started a rural attention program that will provide gifted special services to remote states where no specialized attention currently exists. It should be noted that in October 2018, the regional center of CEDAT Ciudad Satelite reported its first 500 cases of gifted students being identified in the state of Mexico (EdoMex), in the northern countryside of the Mexico City metropolitan area.

This year, the Third International Conference on Giftedness was held in the Mexican capital from May 26-28, 2018, on the theme of media and social impact. More than 1,000 people attended. This conference is the only current annual event in Mexico that delves into this field. This year was a unique opportunity for gifted students to present the results of their cluster enrichment projects in the sciences, such as chemistry and astronomy. Approximately 150 gifted children participated actively in the conference by presenting research projects orally, through scientific posters, and a school enrichment fair. The conference included international participation from individuals including Dr. Helmuth Nyborg, Dr. Jose Rodriguez, and Dr. Jonathan Wai.

It should be noted that after one and a half years of joint work between the Mexican House of Representatives and the CEDAT, the federal law approved in December 2017 that mandates special schools for gifted students went into full legal effect. Therefore, in September 2018 the special commission formed by the Mexican House of Representatives to promote laws for gifted students declared its objective fulfilled and concluded its work. The steps taken by those initiatives helped further advance the professionalization of intelligence testing and the rights of gifted students to receive special education.

In November 2018, the Mexican Alliance for Giftedness announced the construction of larger premises in the specialized center CEDAT in Mexico City that currently houses more than 300 gifted students. This expansion would allow this center to expand to three times its class size and serve waitlisted students who were previously denied access to specialized education due to lack of space. The expected spring 2019 inauguration of these new premises is part of the 2016-2020 National Expansion Plan of the Mexican Alliance for Giftedness which seeks to gradually provide attention for more gifted students throughout the country.

This year we held our second Gifted Medical Summer Program at the IMSS (a Mexican State Institute of Health), which provides internships where students participate in laboratory and clinical activities alongside physicians to advance their learning about medicine. This program was based on a mentorship system where gifted children were directly advised and instructed by medical doctors in their everyday practice.

In October 2018, a Harvard-supervised graduate project was started in Mexico with the goal of studying and promoting Arts Education and Museum Studies for gifted students throughout spring 2019. In addition, the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences approved the development of a research model for studying ways of developing inclusiveness for hyperactive gifted students at Mexican museums. The first results of these international ventures are expected by summer 2019.

The Community of the Gifted in Mexico is looking forward to the organization of the Fourth Mexican International Conference on Giftedness, which will be held June 8-9, 2019. At that event several renowned researchers from different education sectors will be keynote speakers including Dr. Elena Grigorenko, Dr. David Lubinski, Dr. Sandra Gudiño, and Dr. Alberto Ross.

Submitted by Andrew Almazán Anaya and Zayda Accevo Zepeda (sobredotadomexicano@gmail.com)
Current Dutch education is based on a social paradigm of inclusion, an educational paradigm of the development of future-focused skills, and a socio-economic paradigm of stimulating excellence. Teachers feel challenged by the consequences these paradigms have on their daily practice.

The concept of inclusion is translated to mean an educational practice wherein all schools strive to meet the educational needs of every child in a home environment. The government reduced the amount of SEN schools to an absolute minimum; consequently, teachers now have to cope with a wide range of students whose educational needs are not always a match with each other. In this context, the inclusive policy requires a solution-focused and needs-based approach. Schools are implementing the concept of Response to Intervention (RtI) with the student’s individual developmental needs at the center of their attention. RtI is applied as a holistic approach wherein both cognitive and conative development is considered.

The socio-economic paradigm, stimulating excellence for all students, creates the opportunity to bring gifted students to our attention. Since 2014, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sciences explicitly stimulated talent development for the top 20% in all areas at all educational levels. Although this policy includes gifted students, it does not solely aim for stimulating excellence in gifted students; the need to individualize education also emerges. As a result of this policy, the call on teachers to be able to differentiate has increased over the last ten years.

The educational paradigm, the strive for the development of future-focused skills, should be seen in the context of worldwide, high-speed changes in science and society. For teachers, the application of this paradigm adds to the complexity of their profession. It requires new pedagogical and didactical approaches that were not included in their teacher education courses at the time that they studied.

Gifted children and their educational needs have been unmistakably placed on the Dutch educational agenda. Schools are obliged to meet their needs as best they can. The Dutch school inspectorate monitors how schools put this mandate into practice. Teachers have become more competent in figuring out inventive ways to provide a challenging education for all students in their classroom. At the same time, they often conclude that their efforts are still not enough for those students who are highly gifted, who act at a highly advanced level, or who have coinciding special needs. Because schools are at liberty take on an approach that, in their opinion, best caters to gifted students, the number of pull-out programs, enrichment classes, and full-time gifted education classes has increased exponentially. What these schools share is that they all are struggling to find a balance between what is maximally desirable and what is maximally workable.

This quest creates the need for a growing number of specialists in gifted education who can meet the needs of the gifted from a school’s perspective on giftedness and within the leading paradigms. There are ample opportunities for teachers to take on continual professional development regarding gifted education. Training courses are available on different levels of educational practice, different scopes and aims, and different levels of time investment.

The professionalization of gifted education has uncovered a new group on which to focus, especially in special programs for the gifted. Teachers in these programs have a trained eye to recognize what is out of the ordinary, not only in development and achievement but also in behavior. In this context, the number of students recognized as twice-exceptional is increasing. These specialists can spot more complex educational needs, and, therefore, they are looking for strategies to respond to those needs. At the same time, there is a growing attention on students who are profoundly gifted and for students who are creatively gifted and whose needs are very difficult to meet in regular settings. Current educational responses for these students are not always sufficient and as a result, these students are at risk.

Since 2014, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, has given the additional directive to build a sustainable structure to support the regional collaboration of school councils. More recently, a new funding stimulation program to meet the needs of gifted students has been announced. For the time frame 2019-2021 a total of €15 million for each year, will be available. Collaborating school councils can apply for this funding. The goal is to stimulate more expertise and knowledge-sharing, to create more appropriate educational opportunities for gifted students, and to encourage collaboration between educators, health care professionals, parents, and, of course, the students themselves.

Submitted by Eleonoor van Gerven and Desirée Houkema (d.houkema@nationaltalentcentre.nl)
This year has been exciting for the gifted community in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Our Network of Expertise (a partnership of NZCGE, NZAGC and REACH Education) was successfully launched, and you can find more details about it at https://giftedaotearoa.nz/.

In association with giftEDnz, Gifted Aotearoa completed a gifted Environmental Scan. This scan was commissioned by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and is being used to guide future decision-making for gifted students on a nationwide level. The Ministry of Education also reinstated a Gifted Ministerial Advisory Group that is composed of researchers, teachers, and professional development providers.

Across the country, the MOE has been running conversations and engagement events to collect the voices of all key stakeholders in education (students, parents, teachers, and training providers) around 12 key areas of education within our system. More details can be found at https://conversation.education.govt.nz/. As part of these conversations, Gifted Aotearoa has conducted 14 events across the country to discuss the nine key themes of Curriculum, Progress, and Achievement (https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/curriculum-progress-and-achievement/) and their impact on gifted learners. The response to these themes has generally been positive as it shows that our school system will be moving further away from standardisation and more into needs-based, rich and authentic learning that is not restricted by age.

The MOE also sought consultation on the draft Learning Support and Action Plan (https://conversation.education.govt.nz/assets/DLSAP/Disability-and-Learning-Support-Action-Plan-ENGLISH.pdf), a plan that not only includes special needs students but specifically mentions gifted. The plan includes: (1) improving the way children and young people are assessed for learning needs, (2) strengthening the range of support for children and young people with disabilities and additional learning needs, (3) improving how we respond to neurodiverse and gifted learners, and (4) ensuring that learning support has the resources to increase support and services.

In November, Prime Minister Ardern announced that by 2020, 600 Learning Support Coordinators will be fully funded in schools with the eventual aim of all New Zealand urban schools having a Learning Support Coordinator and rural schools having access to one. The draft plan states that these Learning Support Coordinators’ role is: (1) to be the primary contact for parents and whānau and support them to work with their school, (2) support the school or kura to build capability and knowledge amongst teachers — specialist qualifications may be gained over time, but will not be required at the start, and (3) connect with early learning services to ease the transition from early learning to primary school.

Alongside the plans for our education system, our gifted researchers have also been sharing their expertise. Released in November, the Australasian Journal of Gifted Education (http://www.aaegt.net.au) was published, consisting entirely of work by New Zealanders. Edited by Jo Dean and Dr Nadine Bellam, this journal is a major accomplishment for our New Zealand researchers.

In addition, NZAGC’s APEX – the New Zealand Journal of Gifted Education was launched in an online version using Exeley (https://www.exeley.com/journal/apex). A new editorial board has been announced, and our editor, Dr Janna Wardman, is currently seeking submissions for our 2019 edition.

Finally, WCGTC links have been strengthened by those in the gifted community meeting with Japan’s WCGTC representative, Yukiko Sakai, and WCGTC member Kyoko Taguchi as they travelled around New Zealand to learn about how we respond and cater to our gifted children.

Submitted by Brooke Trenwith (brooketrenwith@xtra.co.nz), Deborah Walker, and Lynn Berresford
OMAN

The first pull-out enrichment program in Oman will be conducted this coming spring at a governmental school in Muscat. This program is part of a series of enrichment programs conducted by a team of researchers at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), the only governmental university in Oman. The enrichment program is funded by an internal research grant at the SQU (IG/EDU/PSYC/18/01). The principal investigator of the project is Dr. Ahmed Hassan Hemdan Mohamed, an associate professor in the College of Education. Dr. Mohamed has led several pioneering research grants on the national level. The purpose of this program is to provide high-achieving students with enrichment opportunities that enhance their problem solving and creative thinking skills. The topic of the program will be building a city using electricity principles and applications. In this unit, high-achieving students will study several lessons that are related to solving the problem they are given at the beginning of the unit. Throughout the unit, the students will learn problem-solving techniques and strategies for solving problems in a scientific way. An integral part of the enrichment program will be activities such as field trips to local electricity distributing companies, guest speakers, and workshops for students and teachers.

Submitted by Ahmed Hassan Hamdan (amohamed@squ.edu.om)

SLOVENIA

The Centre for the Research and Promotion of Giftedness at Faculty of Education University of Ljubljana (CRSN) successfully proceeded with its national and international collaboration. Within the European Talent Support Network (ETSN), eight new Talent Points were promoted, including a wide range of organizations from preschool education institutions to the Natural Park Škocjanske Jame, all of which demonstrated the need to contribute to gifted education in different cultural contexts.

In July, CRSN organized the European Gifted Education Training (EGIFT) Summer School for In-service Teachers using the framework from the Erasmus+ Project EGIFT (for details see http://highability.eu/), which was originally coordinated by the Centre for Talented Youth Ireland. The program focused on underachievement, equality of access, and multiple exceptionalities. During the event, 36 education professionals and ten academics worked together and learned about indoor and outdoor methodologies in gifted education.

In September 2018, CRSN held a conference for ETSN Talent Points from Slovenia and former Yugoslavia countries, where the recent results of the aforementioned project were presented. The guest of honor was Prof. Dr. Joan Freeman, who held a lecture about personality development in gifted individuals.

On October 5, World Teachers Day, CRSN provided schools with a translation of the publication Top 20 Principles from Psychology for Pre-K–12 Creative, Talented, and Gifted Students’ Teaching and Learning (APA, 2017) in the Slovenian language.

On December 18, there was a thematic national conference entitled the 5th CRSN Study Afternoon which focused on presenting empirical evidence of personality characteristics in gifted adolescents. The keynote was given by Prof. Dr. Frank Worrell, the co-author of Mega Model of Talent Development, who talked about talent development and high performance. For more in-information, visit https://www.pef.uni-li.si/crsn.html.

It is also important to mention some relevant activities from CRSN Talent Points. First, the Association for the Technical Culture of Slovenia (ZOTKS) was the organizer of the 16th European Union Science Olympiad in 2018. The Olympiad was held at the University of Ljubljana by the Faculty for Chemistry and Chemical Technology from April 28 to May 5. Students aged 15 – 19 came from 25 countries to participate in the Olympiad. There were 156 competitors and 86 mentors who participated, as well as other supporting staff. The team from the Czech Republic won the contest, with Estonia and Slovenia receiving second and third place, respectively. Read more at https://www.euso2018.si/home/.

Second, the upper secondary school, First Gymnasium Maribor, successfully ended the second year of the three-year ERASMUS+ project entitled “Brains in action – Exchanging new ways of learning and teaching for high achievers in a European school network.” The project aims to foster the development of high achievers
Spain

Two major projects are taking place during 2018 in Catalonia (Spain), carried out by the High Intellectual Abilities Working Group (GTAC) of the Official College of Psychologists of Catalonia (COPC), in collaboration with the High Intellectual Abilities Working Group of the College of Pedagogues of Catalonia (COPEC) and with representatives of the associations of families of children with high intellectual abilities: FANJAC (Fundació d’Ajuda a Nens i Joves amb Altes Capacitats (Children with High Abilities’ Aid Foundation)) and AFINS (Associació de Familiars d’Infants Superdotats (Association of Families of Gifted Children)).

First, on November 24, 2018, the 5th National High Intellectual Abilities Working day was held in Barcelona with a focus on attention to diversity in children with high intellectual abilities. For this occasion, the interesting and timely focus for the day was on the differences that we find among the people who can be included in this group, differences that exist both in the personal characteristics and in the need for attention and intervention. The other project took place on May 29, 2018, when the GTAG presented the updated guide on High Intellectual Abilities (HIA) for psychologists, pedagogues, and teachers.

Besides these events, we have continued with the cycle of round tables about HIA that take place every two months in the auditorium of the COPC and with the accreditation program for professionals in HIA. Regarding the attention to, identification of, and intervention with gifted and talented children, as usual, the educational and health administrations of Spain, the official College of Psychologists, and others had important roles enforcing their deontological code to warrant the correct use of techniques, instruments, and resources to ensure that all students are educated regardless of their needs and therefore to stress the importance of the formation of the different education ministries and administrations as well as the different parents’ associations.

Along this line, we must point out the conference on Giftedness to the Development of the Talent, imparted by Yolanda Benito for the Education and Culture Ministry of Uruguay and the University of Montevideo, as well as the conference Giftedness: Tools for Evaluation and Intervention Strategies for the Catholic University of Uruguay in the framework of the Master of Education with emphasis in learning difficulties.

During the institutional visit to Uruguay, Yolanda Benito and Juan A. Alonso, advisers of the first pilot plan for the detection of HIA and gifted children, were welcomed by María Julia Muñoz, Education Minister, and Irupé Buzzeti, President of the Primary Education Counsel. We also participated online in the Third National and First International Working Day in México DF: HIA in Family, School, and Society.

We must point out as well the publication of “Manual Screening Test for Gifted Students” and the “Scientific Screening Test ‘Huerta Del Rey’ for Gifted Students, Application of Raven Color (CPM).” Authors include Benito, Y., Moro, J., Alonso, J.A., and Guerra, S. The purpose is to identify students with possible intellectual giftedness at the ages of six, seven, and eight in ethnic minorities, hearing impaired children, students with language difficulties, children with learning disabilities, children with impairments, low cultural class students, and those who are unfamiliar with the language of the country. There are no linguistic or cultural barriers.

During this scholar course, we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Specific Program for Gifted Students (MEPS) Psychological and Social Enrichment Model, Course 2018-2019.

There was also active participation from the Huerta del Rey Center at the Youth Meeting in Dublin from August 8–11, 2018, at the European Talent Centre in Spain (European Talent Support Network). The singularity of this center and its working methods make it a resource center for parents, youth, educational professionals, psychologists, and other related scientists. It is an investigation center with doctors in psychology, education sciences, and medicine, with agreements from national and international universities and some ministries.

Submitted by Juan A. Alonso and Leopold Carreras-Truñó (leopold.carreras@gmail.com)

**SWEDEN**

In previous newsletters we have reported that gifted education and training in high ability in general are lacking in the curricula in Swedish teacher education. So far, it is rare that universities offer courses related to gifted education. At this point in time, the only ones I know of are at Stockholm University, which offers a course in special pedagogics on high ability; Linnaeus University, which offers two courses, one for elementary teachers and one for secondary teachers where teaching mathematically high-ability students is a part of the course; and Karlstad University, which offers a course in teacher education in which working with a student “who easily reaches the goals” is part of the curriculum. However, the awareness of high ability among student teachers is increasing. One reason might be that some universities offer seminars on gifted education to their student teachers that are not in the official curriculum. Another reason might be that discussions of high ability have become more common in Sweden. In addition, the National Agency for Education released a guide for gifted education in 2015 which may have influenced student teachers’ interest in gifted education.

Most bachelor and master theses from Swedish teacher education programs are available online in different databases; one of those data bases is the Digitala Vetenskapliga Arkivet (DiVA) [www.diva-portal.org](http://www.diva-portal.org). By using keywords both in Swedish and English relating to gifted education and high ability, I investigated the number of bachelor and master theses from teacher education. The results of the number of theses per year starting from 2001 until the first half of 2018 can be seen in Figure 1.

![Number of Exam Works per Year](image)

*Figure 1. Bachelor and master theses in teacher education related to gifted education and/or high ability*
A deeper analysis of the bachelor and master theses shows that most of them come from Stockholm University, Linneaus University, Karlstad University, and Örebro University. Although I have not found that gifted education is included in the curricula of teacher education at Örebro University, it has some cooperation with schools in Örebro about gifted education that may involve or affect student teachers. It is reasonable to assume that even if the amount of gifted education in teacher education is limited, the courses that do exist have impacted the awareness of high ability among student teachers.

Teacher education in Sweden is, as I perceive it, good in connecting to new research in pedagogics and didactics. Since 2011, four doctoral theses have been written connected to gifted education. The newest was defended on December 10, 2018, and focuses on teaching to include highly able students in learning in diverse classrooms. The results give support to teachers on how to orchestrate such teaching. It is written in English and can be found at [http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kau:diva-69485](http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kau:diva-69485).

Let’s hope that the trend of student teachers’ increasing interest in gifted education will continue with the effect of increasing future Swedish teachers’ competence on how to include highly able students in learning.

Reference

Submitted by Elisabet Mellroth (elisabet.mellroth@kau.se)

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**URUGUAY**

Uruguay still remains quite behind with identifying and serving gifted persons. Unfortunately, after working voluntarily for more than 1.5 years developing a project on law and public policy at the Ministry of Education, Bendelman, Pérez, and Siri are still waiting to implement these projects.

The good news is that a few months ago, a parents association of gifted children (AHSTUY) was created for family members concerned about their children’s education. In the past months, the most important event was the creation of a research group on high abilities/giftedness linked to the School of Educational Sciences at Universidad de la Empresa. The group is growing exponentially, led by Dr. Susana Pérez Barrera and integrated with researchers from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and the USA.

Additionally, Karen Bendelman and Susana Pérez Barrera have published two books presenting the scales to identify gifted persons from early childhood education through adult life: *Manual de Identificación de Altas Habilidades/Superdotación* and *Altas Habilidades/Superdotación: Instrumentos para la detección de niños, adolescentes y adultos* (Isadora, 2018). These scales were applied by Uruguayan teachers from elementary and secondary schools throughout the country during two years and used as field work by Masters in education and Bachelors in pedagogy students from two universities. They appear to be efficient methods for identifying gifted students in the classrooms.

During the past four months, the same scales have been used to identify children, adolescents, and adults in the extension activities developed by the research group on High Abilities/Giftedness and in a project to find out regional estimates on gifted fifth graders and students in third grade at secondary schools (or equivalent) in Córdoba, Argentina; Brazil; and Uruguay. The group is also developing workshops for gifted students’ parents; identifying gifted children, adolescents, and adults; and school supporting activities.

In addition, a positive-degree specialization in gifted education has been prepared and submitted to the National Agency of Research and Innovation in Uruguay. We are waiting for the results.

Lastly, Pérez Barrera has published a book on adults, *Personas con Altas Habilidades/Superdotación ¿ser o no ser?* (Aprehendere, 2018), and was keynote speaker at educational conferences in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Medellín, Colombia; and Londrina and Campo Grande, Brazil.

Submitted by Susana Pérez Barrera (susanapb56@gmail.com) and Karen Bendelman (karenbendelman@gmail.com)
Acceleration is “progress through an educational program at rates faster or at ages younger than conventional” (Pressey, 1949, p. 2). The United States’ National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) position paper on academic acceleration adds important nuances, stating, “Educational acceleration is one of the cornerstones of exemplary gifted education practices, with more research supporting this intervention than any other in the literature on gifted individuals. The practice of educational acceleration has long been used to match high-level student general ability and specific talent with optimal learning opportunities” (NAGC, n.d., from http://www.nagc.org/about-nagc/nagc-position-statements-white-papers).

Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik, Wendy A. Behrens, and Susan G. Assouline co-authored a new publication, Developing Academic Acceleration Policies:Whole Grade, Early Entrance & Single Subject. This free publication presents recommended elements of acceleration policies, supports schools in creating comprehensive and research-based acceleration policies that are compatible with local policies, and provides checklists for (1) A Whole-Grade Acceleration Policy, (2) An Early Entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade Acceleration Policy, and (3) A Subject Acceleration Policy. You may download the report from http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/Resources/Policies/Developing-Academic-Acceleration-Policies.pdf.

What does the American Public (or the citizens of the USA) Think about Gifted Education?

The Institute for Educational Advancement (IEA) released a report of the first comprehensive public opinion poll about gifted education in the United States. America Agrees: Public Opinion Towards Gifted Education, by IEA Director Elizabeth Jones and Dr. Shelagh Gallagher, details the beliefs, attitudes, and concerns of the American public along numerous aspects of gifted education. The poll solicited definitions of “gifted” and associated terms from participants and assessed level of concern over teacher preparation in gifted education, identification and services for low-income and minority gifted students, and available funding for gifted programs. The poll also assessed public support for commonly recommended program provisions including acceleration and ability grouping, providing mentorships, and creating separate or online schools for gifted students. A separate section of the poll tested advocacy messages to determine which were more convincing to the public at large. Messages represented common themes in gifted education advocacy including Aspiration for America’s Future, Gifted from Underserved Communities, and Future Innovators. Results of the poll paint an optimistic portrait of readiness to improve provisions for America’s brightest students. For more information, email Morgan Carrion at mcarrion@educationaladvancement.org or visit educationaladvancement.org.

As a follow-up, IEA sponsored a policy think-tank meeting at Johns Hopkins University November 28-29 with representatives from the University of Iowa Belin-Blank Center, Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth, the Gifted Support Center, and NAGC. The group planned several initiatives based on public support for teacher preparation in gifted education and improving services in underserved populations.

Gifted Education Advocates Tell Their Stories at National Conference

NACG held its annual conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in November 2018. A key mission of NAGC is advocacy at the local, state, and national levels. NAGC sponsored a panel, Advocating for Gifted Students in an Era of Divisive Politics, chaired by Dr. Ann Robinson, past president of NAGC. Advanced advocates from the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, and New Mexico shared stories and strategies for successful advocacy. Panelists Dr. Tracy Inman (Kentucky), Mr. Andres Melendez (New Mexico), and Ms. Amy Waine (Alabama) represented university, parent, and district administrator advocates whose experiences highlighted how even in challenging political and economic times, advocates for gifted education services can successfully acquire funding, develop policies, and secure the services that flow from those resources. In addition to the stories and strategies from the interactive panel, attendees provided their own insights and experiences. Key themes that emerged from experienced advocates included the importance of knowing who should be your advocacy target for your advocacy goal, understanding that advocacy for acceptance of giftedness is a key building block for sustained advocacy, and recognizing that a small group of people have the power to make a difference. Panelists and attendees shared their most effective verbal arguments for securing funding and other resources at the local and state levels. Resources provided by NAGC can be found at http://www.nagc.org/get-involved/advocate-high-ability-learners/legislative-action-network. Look for more opportunities to interact with advocates at the 2019 US NAGC Annual Conference in beautiful New Mexico from November 7-10.

The USA Delegates look forward to seeing World Council members at the 23rd Biennial World Conference in Nashville, Tennessee this July. Welcome!
World Gifted newsletter is the bulletin of the World Council. It contains the latest news and information concerning the organization, its membership, and the international gifted education community.

We invite all members to contribute and report on anything that would be of interest to other members, such as events and initiatives, news about regional organizations, profiles of individual members, or announcements.

Submissions should include the name of the author, title, and country of residence. Send contributions for consideration to: Tyler Clark, Editor, at headquarters@world-gifted.org. Please give us enough lead time if the submission concerns an upcoming event.

Gifted and Talented International

Gifted and Talented International (GTI) is the official journal of the World Council. GTI is refereed by an editorial review board of leading international educators of the gifted. It is published twice a year.

The purpose of the journal is to share current theory, research, and practice in gifted education with its audience of international educators, scholars, researchers, and parents. Articles for the journal are welcome and may be submitted at any time.

For questions about submitting a manuscript, contact Dr. Leonie Kronborg at leonie.kronborg@monash.edu. Guidelines for submitting manuscripts can be found at www.world-gifted.org/gti-submit.

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