I started my term as the president of ECHA two years ago, after our excellent conference in Münster. It is my pleasure to tell you that the Münster Conference received the conference award of the City of Münster. Big congratulations to Christian Fischer, and his excellent team for this! I am sure that our conference in Ljubljana and the 2016 ECHA Conference in Wien (note in your calendar that it will be between March 2nd and 5th in 2016!) will have an equally large success.

During and after the Münster Conference many ECHA members encouraged me to do more to make ECHA more active in between its excellent biannual conferences. The General Committee was thinking on both small steps and larger steps to achieve this goal.

As one of the changes we renewed the former practice that the regular issues of ECHA News are directly sent to ECHA members as an email-attached pdf file. I think this makes ECHA News more personal than a web-site access. Let me take this opportunity, and on behalf of the General Committee thank Annette Heinbokel for her continuous efforts to fill ECHA News with high-quality content! All those, who read these lines please help Annette (ourselves!) to send more news items, more opinions to ECHA News!

Led by the excellent help of Margaret Sutherland the General Committee re-negotiated the publishing agreement of High Ability Studies, which was unchanged for almost twenty years. The new agreement will ensure more options for open-access of the papers, as well as a wider access of the electronic version of the journal.

A few months ago the General Committee elected Prof. Albert Ziegler as the incoming Editor-in-Chief of High Ability Studies for 4 years after the current Editor-in-Chief, Heidrun Stöger steps down at the end of December. Let me thank Heidrun for all her excellent work. Albert was already a two-term Editor-in-Chief of the journal. I thank Albert that he accepted this tedious job again to raise the Journal’s prestige even further, and to help ECHA with that.

The General Committee erased the former rule, that the special issues of High Ability Studies require a payment from the guest-editors to ECHA. Thanks to my predecessor, Kirsi Tirri, and our treasurer, Tessa Kiebom, the financial situation of ECHA is now stable. Thus, we can support our journal to attract more high-profile people as guest editors.

Thanks to the wise encouragement of Margaret Sutherland, we scrutinized the Articles of ECHA, which were unchanged since the legal incorporation of ECHA 20 years ago, and proposed a few changes to the General Assembly to update them. We did the same with the Standing Orders, which were unchanged in the last 4 years. As it turned out in the consultations with a public notary, ECHA is mandated to have a General Assembly each year. So we will have one in 2015 too. This will also give another novel opportunity to meet person-in-person with some of our members.

We established an ECHA Facebook site, which is drawing more and more members (currently close to two hundred). The site proved to be a good vehicle to spread important news fast, and to share opinions on different subjects. As all initiatives which are new, the Facebook site also had childhood-diseases. The most important of these is that only a few of the Facebook site members are active users. I hope the activity will grow there as well.

We are about to finish the renewal of ECHA’s web-site. Let me stress that the most important changes of the ECHA web-site will not be visible even at the new site yet! The reason of this seemingly paradox statement is that we will add new functions to our web-site in each three-four months. So please check out from time to time the new ECHA web-site (which will be at the same URL address: www.echa.info), since it will not only have updated news, but will also have new features, such as intranet forums, video, and picture galleries, event-calendar, etc.
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 plan three important changes. First, we will launch an ECHA membership campaign led by the devoted Secretary of ECHA, Lianne Hoogeveen. The number of ECHA members slowly but steadily decreased in the past few years. Especially disturbing is that the number of student members also decreased. On the one hand this is natural, since many former student members are now regular members. But on the other hand, student members are in a way the future of ECHA, so we need more of them. We used the Ljubljana Conference to ask participants to become members of ECHA, and we will make other efforts, like a gifted education media-campaign, and the help of the European Talent Support Network to increase ECHA membership. We will ask the help of our national correspondents in this. However, we need your help too. Please ask your colleagues, if they are already ECHA members, and if not, tell them to join! As a part of the renewed member-centred ECHA activities, we will send more communication to our members. Do not worry! We do not want to increase your spam emails, and will restrict ourselves to important messages only. But I sincerely hope that for the future of ECHA, ECHA members will have much more important messages for each other than before. We, at the General Committee and at the Executive Committee, will be truly happy to channel all these.

The second very important breakthrough area is ECHA-education. With the leadership of our excellent vice-president and secretary, Christian Fischer and Lianne Hoogeveen, the newly formed ECHA Education Board having Christian Fischer, Lianne Hoogeveen, Ulrike Kempter and Victor Mueller-Oppliger as members, will formulate a set of criteria for ECHA-Diplomas, and will extend the education structure towards a European Masters degree and PhD in gifted education.

Last but not least the General Committee made a proposal to reach a new intensity of cooperation in helping the highly able young people in Europe. ECHA members received our plans for the European Talent Support Network. This proposal of cooperation will strengthen ECHA in the ECHA education programme, in the efforts to give more to ECHA members, and in increasing the ECHA membership. I strongly hope that the European Talent Support Network will help to channel high level expertise and goodwill for the benefit of gifted and talented young people in Europe. There is no blueprint for such a network. It will not copy or up-scale anything. This network of cooperation will be exactly that, what you, ECHA members, and other people devoted to help the highly able, will make out of it. The European Talent Support Network will copy only one thing: the diversity of Europe. I expect a great variety of solutions for efficient cooperation, which will be a treasure for all of us. Sharing the results of high level research, the best practices of supporting the gifted and talented will help all of us. ECHA will help to establish and maintain the high standards of this networking process. But no costly control, no lengthy, bureaucratic reporting-processes are planned. Our energies are expensive. Thus, we have to use these energies for high level studies in the field of gifted education, and to help young, talented people to find themselves and to find happiness through fulfilling their dreams. It would be a waste of our energies to use them for reporting instead of the actual work (which would have been the subject of reports). I hope that the European Talent Support Network will be a learning organization. The success of ECHA encourages me that we are able to correct ourselves when finding a better solution, which changes our (bad or at least sub-optimal) habits.

In summary, it was a great pleasure to serve ECHA as its president in the first two years of my 4-year-term. I learned a lot on the high standards, rich history and traditions of this organization having more than 25 years of existence. I will be very happy to continue this service, and help the ECHA-spirit to grow. Along these lines, let me finish with one of the symbols of the ECHA-spirit from the early years: Echa-cha!

[Post-script: Did you know that Echa Cha is a nice lady in Indonesia working as a business analyst in information technology: https://www.linkedin.com/in/echacha, or ECHA is also the name of the European Chemicals Agency: http://echa.europa.eu? See: our diversity is growing to rather unexpected dimensions – even before starting a new intensity of cooperation to learn its true depth ☺]

Peter Csermely, president of ECHA

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This editorial deals with languages and translations.

One of the main problems in the world, including ECHA, is communication: being able to understand the person opposite and making her/him understand what we want to say. People who go to international conferences are usually able and confident to use the conference language, those who are not often don't take part. And all of us have come across weird and wonderful translations by persons not very familiar with the target language, using a dictionary or one of those translating programmes you can find in the internet. Here is one example:

**A sign posted in Germany’s Black Forest:**

It is strictly forbidden on our black forest camping site that people of different sex, for instance, men and women, live together in one tent unless they are married with each other for that purpose.

Last year I agreed to do three translations for nifbe, the “Niedersächsisches Institut für frühkindliche Bildung und Entwicklung” (see the article by Birgit Behrensen, page 16). I knew it would be difficult, and problems began right away with the title of the institute and one of the brochures: “Individuelle Förderung in KiTa und Grundschule”. There are no suitable English words for “Bildung” and “Förderung” that exactly convey their meaning in English.

Neither (internet) dictionaries nor emails to two bilingual friends helped.

In Germany when we speak about what children should grow up with – apart from food, shelter and clothing – we invariably use the two expressions “Bildung und Erziehung” together. The latter is fairly easy: it encompasses the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) including behaviour towards others and manners, tools every person should have to manage everyday life. It can roughly be translated with education. “Bildung” is far more than that. It includes some understanding and knowledge of the arts, music, literature, maybe appreciation of good food, a foreign language or two at a fairly sophisticated level, .... the finer things in life, in any case more than the basics. There is no really suitable English word for it, so Roland Persson used it in his article, and people with a European education who have got “Bildung” are likely to understand it.

The second stumbling stone was “Förderung”, you can find the explanation on page 16. After many exchanges via email I chose “promotion”, however, that does not mean exactly the same as in German. In desperation I suggested to leave the German word and as the text would appear on the institute’s website, mark it and when people click on to it they find the explanation. That way the whole world would be given a new German word such as kindergarten or abseiling and langlau-fing. OR use promotion and mark that to access the explanation.

When I had finished the translation I had a whole list of more or less untranslatable words. I don’t have that problem when I write a text in English. I then think in English from the start, avoiding those difficult words. It would be nice if you could go to the texts (http://www.nifbe.de/info-service/downloads-english) and let me know what you think of my translation.

Most of the members of ECHA have English as a foreign language. Some of you speak and write it with ease, some of you struggle. Don’t worry about sending me an English text that is not perfect. It is my job as an editor to notice expressions and sentences that may be wrong or difficult to understand and sort it out with you. So far that has not been a problem.

Two more things:

If you are a native English speaker at a conference such as ECHA or the WCGTC, remember that the people in your audience are experts in their fields, but not necessarily in English: Try to speak slowly and fairly simply, it’s more important to be understood than to sound most sophisticated to a sophisticated audience (and I DO hope that I got that right so far!).

Secondly, one of the jobs of ECHA members and in particular the ECHA correspondents is to transport important texts or information into their native languages. Although English is compulsory in most German schools, German kindergarten or primary school teachers, even many grammar school teachers have trouble or are even unable to understand a scientific text in English. I suppose that’s the same in many other countries. And that is probably the greatest obstacle to gaining a significant number of new ECHA members.

*Annette Heinbokel, editor*

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Between the 14th and 20th September 2014, the city of Ljubljana, Slovenia, hosted the 14th ECHA Conference, in cooperation with two local partners, the Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana and the company MIB d. o. o.

At this well-attended conference, 250 different experts from 40 countries participated. During the four days, the educators, teachers, psychologists, pedagogues, university professors, and researchers delivered 186 research and professional contributions, among them 7 practical demonstrations, 8 workshops, 15 contributions within 4 symposiums, and 113 individual papers within 31 thematic sections. Two additional meetings were organized as well. The first was aimed at the possibilities an ECHA organisation can offer to the international cooperation in educating teachers working with gifted students. The second addressed (under)graduate students in the methodology of researching giftedness and the students were able to discuss open issues with established researchers from the entire world.

In addition, the 2014 General Assembly was held on the second day of the conference and ECHA members agreed that ECHA supports, regulates and guides the formation of a European Talent Support Network.

The conference title was chosen with the intention of reflecting upon understanding giftedness, and discussing gifted children and youth in modern times, after the end of the first decade of the new century and looking towards the future. The four conference days were therefore thematically divided into sets, which contentwise complemented and improved on one another. The first day of the conference aimed at reflecting on giftedness and the gifted in the digital age in Europe and beyond. The introductory lecture, which followed the opening ceremony, was team based. It was moderated by Margaret Sutherland, a long-time member of ECHA and a current member of the ECHA executive committee. The lecture featured Joan Freeman, founding president of ECHA and Peter Csermely, the current ECHA president. Freeman focused on the very beginning of ECHA and vividly walked us through the three decades of ECHA work, or, as she put it, “the ups and downs, which only made the organisation stronger”, while Csermely presented the modern vision of ECHA which is based on stimulating future research and professional work, collaboration and social networking.

The following three days of the conference were marked by the exchange of varying contents. They were aimed at reflecting on:

1. the open possibilities brought by the digital age in the area of working with gifted students (i.e. education, consulting, research and clinical practice),
2. the modern trends of research and further evolution of the field (i.e. new research areas and innovations) and
3. the horizons which are recognizable in the given areas (how to use advantages/strengths and avoid threats in the meanwhile).

The keynote speakers, the eminent European researchers, Albert Ziegler, Norbert Jaušovec and Marta Fulop, presented the “state of the art” in the current practice of working with gifted students, neurophysiologic findings regarding the brains of the gifted, and competitiveness, as one of the prevailing features related to the today’s lives of gifted students. Their thoughts echoed with the conference attendees and presenters, and their topics related to other contributions pre-
sented in other forms of delivery. The conference participants were equally inspired by the invited speakers: Shelya Blumen (Peru), Jasna Cvetković Lay (Croatia), Csilla Fuszek (Hungary), Lianne Hoogeveen (The Netherlands), Martin Kubala (The Czech Republic), Slavica Marsić (Serbia), Peter Merrotys (Australia), Carrie Winstely (UK) and Frank Worrell (USA). Thanks to modern technology the conference attendees were additionally honoured by the evening lecture delivered by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, one of the founders of positive psychology, who through a video conference discussed his positive view on the role and influence of the digital age on the evolution of creativity as the central human activity.

Reviewing the research and professional contributions (represented relatively equally), which ran parallel or sequentially during the conference, it seems as if the trend of the professional and research efforts in working with gifted students is moving mainly towards researching various specific opportunities for a healthy personal development of gifted young people as well as the quality of their education and career development, that allow an optimal realisation of their potentials. Moreover, the key role of teachers and/or mentors in these processes was explicitly highlighted. Illuminating presentations and rich discussions among the conference participants showed that European experts have a lot of knowledge and expertise which are based on a sound empirical basis. This is a positive outcome and should serve as a strong encouragement and stimulation for researchers and educators to continue with their efforts in the future.

The evaluation of the conference showed that the participants were more than satisfied with the event. In their statements, they specifically mentioned an enjoyable cooperative conference atmosphere, networking, acquiring new theoretical insights, being updated on recent research findings and collecting new ideas regarding practical work with gifted students and finally gaining a new understanding of the inclusion of the digital media into the education of (gifted) students.

A novelty of this year’s conference refers to the awards given for the presentations of posters which aimed at giving more support to this type of conference contribution and to stimulate young researchers to present the newest original (preliminary) research or innovations. After the selection by the attendees, the award for the best poster presentation of the most original research entitled “Investigation about Mentoring Studies’ Effects on Gifted Students” was given to Fatih Tokmak from Turkey, while Lineke Van Tricht, Lilian Snijders and Phil Rhebergen from the Netherlands were praised for the best innovation in practice delivered on the poster entitled “The Leiden Approach”. The awardees can attend the next ECHA conference, held in Vienna in 2016, free of the registration fee. Congratulations!


Allow me to close this report with a thought from one of the conference attendees: “ECHA runs! See you in Vienna 2016!”

Mojca Jurišević
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Around 750 participants attended the conference, having previously been held in Münster (Germany) and Salzburg (Austria); this year it took place in Switzerland for the first time.

From Thursday, 4th September, to Saturday, 6th September, teachers and specialists in gifted education as well as researchers and experts in the field of education met for knowledge-sharing, discussions on research results and the exchange of ideas on the campus of the University of Teacher Education Northwestern Switzerland in Brugg.

The conference was opened by Christoph Eymann, president of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK), and Hermann Forneck, director of the University of Teacher Education Northwestern Switzerland. Victor Müller-Oppliiger, initiator of the conference and professor at the University of Teacher Education (and member of the ECHA Committee) welcomed participants, contributors and guests. He warmly introduced the first keynote speakers, Joseph S. Renzulli and Sally M. Reis (University of Connecticut, USA), who presented an “infusion based approach” to support a change from “deductive”, “didactic” and “prescriptive” ways of teaching to “inductive”, “investigative” and “inquiry oriented” ways of learning. Talking about their research findings and practical experience they easily succeeded in making the public understand their deep belief in the importance of enjoyment, commitment and enthusiasm for enhanced learning processes.

Heidrun Stöger (University of Regensburg, Germany) introduced “Cyber Mentor”, a project initiated to motivate interested young women to participate in demanding STEM programmes in baccalaureate schools and to pass on to STEM studies at university level. “Cyber mentor” involves about 1000 girls and women annually. The mentors, working in science or economics, share their experience via different e-platforms and regular “real life” meetings with their mentees. Together they work on smaller or larger projects the mentors propose to their mentees. As the evaluation of the project shows, three thirds of the mentees enter STEM studies after the baccalaureate.

In her second presentation Heidrun Stöger spoke about learning strategies, preferences of gifted children for certain strategies and the risk of failure in the course of transition from one school level to the next in case of missing strategies. Research done by Stöger and her team shows that gifted children are more aware of their strategies and are able to explain more clearly why strategies are useful. Even if gifted children in primary school do not use strategies so often, this is not a disadvantage in any case, as family background can compensate for the lack. Programmes to train the use of strategies can be successful if they combine cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, if they do not teach strategies in an isolated way but linked with school contents, and if teachers are themselves carefully and systematically prepared for this kind of training.
The last keynote speech of the conference, held by Margrit Stamm (University of Fribourg, Switzerland), was about five myths concerning gifted education in Switzerland. Her main message was that the education system in Switzerland is far from an equitable support of talent development of all students. Especially children from economically disadvantaged and migrant families are often ignored and not selected for gifted programmes as tests might be ethnocentric and alternative selection strategies biased by stereotypes.

The keynotes, parallel sessions and workshops followed four «learning paths»:

- awakening talents – discovering potentials: pedagogical diagnosis as a teacher’s core duty
- learning environments – individualised learning paths in a learning community
- partnership and participation – counselling and mentoring as personalised support
- school development – school models and steps towards the inclusive fostering of gifted children

Two additional platforms centred on fostering talents in tertiary education and school leadership.

Christian Fischer (University of Münster, Germany), Gabriele Weigand (University of Teacher Education Karlsruhe, Germany), Letizia Gauck (University of Basel, Switzerland), Dominik Gyseler (University of Applied Sciences of Special Needs Education, Switzerland) and Victor Müller-Oppliger (University of Teacher Education Northwestern Switzerland) delivered presentations in parallel sessions. In more than 60 workshops experts from Austria, Germany and Switzerland shared their knowledge, discussing numerous aspects considering the above mentioned «learning paths». The presentations and workshops ranged from in-depth research to everyday school practice, from kindergarten level to university level and from theoretical approaches to political considerations.

As a framework programme a special dinner had been organised. On Friday evening five buses brought the guests to a market garden to have an after work drink and dinner in a huge glasshouse.

Klaus Urban, professor emeritus (University of Hannover, Germany), well known for his research in creativity and creative giftedness, entertained the public with a brilliant poetry slam and “Pfuschi”, a cartoonist, with his caricatures showing very special impressions of the conference.

The closing session on Saturday offered the opportunity to thank the partners for all kinds of support and to appreciate all the helping hands having made the conference very convenient for all participants.

Silvia Grossenbacher is coordinator of the Swiss «Netzwerk Begabungsförderung» (network for gifted education), staff member of the Swiss Coordination Centre for Research in Education and ECHA correspondent for Switzerland.

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15th International ECHA Conference 2016

Talents in Motion

Encouraging the Gifted in the context of Migration and Intercultural Exchange

2 – 5 March, 2016 | Vienna, Austria

ANDREA PINZ, AUSTRIA

Due to its specific historical and geographic site Vienna looks back to a long tradition of migration and of intercultural dialogue. People of different backgrounds have realized their talents and have made Vienna into what it represents today.

So the Austrian capital is in the ideal position to offer itself as a venue for a conference that combines the great socially and educationally relevant topics: giftedness and migration. In a cosmopolitan and intellectually demanding setting it was and is possible that highly talented and extremely gifted women and men could and can deliver outstanding performances. Vienna is able to demonstrate the efficiency of all these challenges when it comes to supporting promising talent.

Main emphasis with regard to content

Given the long tradition of education and migration in many European countries, the topics of multiculturalism and intercultural exchange are key priorities on the educational agenda, as well as being natural prerequisites for peaceful co-existence in the 21st century. Giftedness and high potential in a multicultural society are also topics most relevant and of high interest in Austria, but undoubtedly also all over Europe. Talents and high abilities are equally distributed among all cultural, ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups. Therefore, potentials and abilities of children, youngsters and young adults with a migration background need to be specially advanced. This must be done with a high degree of sensitivity.

Thus, the conference focuses on the intercultural and multicultural awareness of educating the (highly) gifted.

The ECHA Conference 2016 will both highlight intellectual abilities and also address the diversity of intelligences that may contribute to a thriving society.

The organizers – The Institute TIBI and the KPH Vienna/Krems

The Institute TIBI, Department for Talent Development and Innovation at the KPH Vienna/Krems (Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule, Christian University College for Teacher Education), has a ten-year experience of contributing to the improvement and modernization of teaching techniques with particular focus on value-oriented education of the (highly) gifted and in cooperation with a strong network of national and international partners. The KPH Vienna/Krems, a private Christian and ecumenical University College is the largest pedagogical institution in Austria and is absolutely unique in Europe. One of its key principles is the encouragement of a broad intellectual education and the personal advancement of individual gifts and talents. In its quality profile the promotion of talent and excellence assumes a central position.

Due to the cooperation with international (ECHA) and national partners (Danube University Krems, ÖZBF Salzburg, Caritas Austria, Industrial Association, BMEIA/Department of Integration Coordination of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, University of Graz, ECHA Austria, but in particular through the support of the Ministry for Economy, Research and Science it can be guaranteed that at the conference 2016 the content priorities will be examined and discussed from manifold points of view and that the different dimensions of the subject matter will find their fitting expressions in it (research and science, psychological and pedagogical practice, societal and social implications, issues concerning the labor market and the economy, historical and geographical references, art and culture).
The venue as programme

At the Private University College of Teacher Education many traditional strands and cultures of teaching and learning come together. And it is always about the strengthening of one’s own identity, about a difference-sensitive attitude, and always in search for manifold potentials and abilities.

Cultural, ethnic and religious diversity is understood as a societally and educationally relevant value. Questions of culturally conditioned differences in the evaluation of learning processes, giftedness and performance will be subjected to careful consideration.

All this is supposed to be especially reflected in the programme of the ECHA Conference 2016.

Apart from Robert Sternberg, who will deliver the keynote speech, Clemens Sedmak (King’s College London) and Heinz Fassmann (University of Vienna), several noted Austrian and international experts have agreed to participate in the conference.

Besides the two major topics, giftedness and migration, colleagues from all areas of research and best practices in the field of high ability are encouraged to share their knowledge and experiences at this meeting.

Vienna, Austria’s capital and largest city with a population of about 2 million, is an ideal place for conferences. Historically, Vienna has always been a city of science and research and is one of the oldest university cities in Europe. The research landscape is shaped by nine universities, five technical colleges, as well as about 1,000 research institutions.

Due to its rich cultural programme, historically interesting spots and high safety standards, Vienna is highly attractive to delegates and participants. Some highlights of the Austrian art and culture scene will be integrated into the conference programme.

The cooperation with the Danube University Krems makes a special offer possible: On one half day, alternative to the conference programme in Vienna, a shuttle service to subject-specific presentations at this well-known institution specialized in further university training will be established. Interested visitors are offered an excursion through the Wachau (UNESCO World Heritage Region) to the Baroque Monastery Melk and to a traditional supper in one of the „Heurigen“ (wine tavern) so typical for this part of the Danube valley.

The TIBI office and the conference facilities are located in the historic city centre of Vienna (Metro-station Stephansplatz), which is well connected to the international airport and the main railway stations. All conference rooms are within walking distance.

It is one of the conference organizers’ main concerns that in the meeting not only intellectual abilities are concentrated on, but also that the various intelligences that contribute to a peaceful society are put into the centre of attention (e.g. social skills, creativity, artistic talents). Only the contribution, cooperation and appreciation of the different cultural backgrounds can guarantee a prosperous social development. This attitude should find expression in various opportunities for personal meetings and in the exchange of content-related views of the conference participants.

The Institute TIBI and its partners are glad to invite you to this conference in Vienna, March 2016.

All ECHA members and interested participants are kindly asked to note the slightly unusual, agreed date of the meeting: March 2-5, 2016 (which was chosen to avoid overlapping with other related meetings in 2016).

Andrea Pinz is Head of TIBI, Institute for Talent Development and Innovation

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The Status Regarding the Education of Gifted Children in Hamburg, Germany (cont.)

JAANA RASMUSSEN, GERMANY

In the spring 2014 ECHA News, Jaana Rasmussen described the situation of gifted education in the city (and state) of Hamburg. Her article ended with this paragraph:

After 2 years of intensive lobbying by the DGHK Hamburg, the school committee at the Hamburg Parliament (Hamburgische Bürgerschaft) convoked an expert hearing regarding educational provisions for gifted children on 9 January 2014. Among the experts were Professor Christian Fischer from the ICBF in Münster (Germany) and Jaana Rasmussen as representative of the DGHK in Hamburg (Germany). All experts demanded that the issue of educational provisions for gifted children should be part of teacher training and that schools focusing on gifted children and youngsters should be defined. After the expert hearing, there was a public hearing of parents, teachers and youngsters on 4 February. Some of the feedback was very emotional and dozens of parents described their children failing at school, as well as a complete lack of understanding on the part of the teachers. Two young boys reported that they had had to change school several times because of bullying and there was a threat they might become underachievers. Teachers complained that they could indeed recognize gifted children in their classes, but were unable to receive any support for appropriate methods or teaching material.

And here is the result of the lobbying process:

After hearing a group of experts (Prof. Christian Fischer, ICBF Münster, Prof. Thomas Trautmann, Hamburg University, Klaus Nemitz, Head of Brecht-School Hamburg, Jaana Rasmussen, DGHK Hamburg and ECHA Coach) and a large group of parents of gifted children and some gifted children themselves, the Hamburg City Parliament decided the following:

1. Every secondary school must have a functional position for gifted education. The teacher chosen for this position must get an obligatory training containing basic knowledge about assessment and diagnosis, support within school and extracurricular activities as well as knowledge of specialist contact persons and organisations in Hamburg. The contact person for gifted education is the local advisor for parents and develops and implements concepts for high ability learners within school.

2. To guarantee, that all secondary schools provide concepts for gifted education including the proven programmes e.g. acceleration, competitions, experimenting programmes as well as other aspects of gifted education.

3. To provide more support for the schools with existing gifted education concepts, to make sure that the competences are preserved at those schools and to secure the long-term implementation of the concepts. Besides the “Schmetterlingsschulen”, other schools (primary and secondary schools) may also participate.

4. To establish a compulsory element “Special and High Ability” in the second phase of teacher education. Next to instruction methodology this contains also questions of assessment and diagnosis. The behavioural differences between girls and boys are also part of the programme.

5. To take into consideration, how the competences of teachers of primary and secondary schools and regional centres for education and consultancy (ReBBZs) in contact with high ability learners can be strengthened, with a focus on the problems of underachievers. To check also the possibilities of including external specialists such as the ICBF in Münster.

6. To inform all schools (teachers, parents, pupils) about the inner-school and extracurricular outer-school promotions and programmes for high ability learners. Acceleration should be named as a proven method of support for gifted children.

7. To make sure that the recommendations of the Counseling Office for Gifted Education (BbB) must be implemented at schools.

8. To implement an ombudsperson for „special talents”, who can provide counseling for parents in conflicts.

9. To provide information on reimbursement for costs of assessment of valid IQ tests and inform parents about the possibilities.

Authors note
This resolution of the City Parliament is an important milestone for gifted education in Hamburg. Two years ago, nobody would have thought that this would be possible – the support of gifted children had been considered as somehow elitist, their special needs an invention of pushy parents. As Einstein said, it is harder to destroy an opinion than to destroy an atom. A small group of parents and a couple of children managed to change parliament’s opinion on the special needs of children with high learning ability in Hamburg.

It will take several years, before all these topics will be realized and implemented in public schools and there are still some important elements missing (e.g. the primary schools).

I hope that this resolution will work as an incentive for other German Länder (federal states) and maybe other countries that change in gifted education is possible. Feel free to contact me if you want to know more.

Jaana Rasmussen has been chairperson of the DGHK Hamburg since 2011. She is an ECHA “Specialist in Coaching the Gifted” and teaches Implementation of Methods in gifted Education at the ICBF in Münster. Jaana Rasmussen lives in Hamburg and has two sons.

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Sweden Awakens to Gifted Education: The Allure of Economic Growth?

ROLAND S. PERSSON, SWEDEN

It has been eight years since I last filed a report on matters relating to giftedness and talent in Sweden. The title of this report was “Underground resistance is alive and well: An unofficial report from Sweden”. I keep wondering when writing this whether this underground movement is still active.

As I wrote my last report there was no official recognition that high ability had value, and whoever was indeed highly able did not qualify for any special provision at any level of the educational system. I and a few enthusiasts did our best to fill the void with appropriate information and to educate where allowed to do so. While the Finns had already focussed on giftedness research for a decade or more, the Danes developed a teacher training programme in gifted education and the Norwegians began developing an interest for talent, particularly in “STEM talent” (that is, in science, technology, engineering and mathematics), the hallmark of Swedish education was at the time “no giftedness”. The political resistance against it was total. This, however, has now changed and it is time to file another report to ECHA News.

The trigger of current development

The origins of this sudden interest in high ability amongst politicians is not an uncommon one, but it is perhaps not an altogether flattering one either: Whilst most of Europe’s education ministries for some time have had an inkling of what gifted education is, though some more than others, the Swedish ministry was completely in the dark. A meeting for all European educators, the Swedish ministry was completely in the dark. A meeting for all European education ministers, where gifted education was at least partly on the agenda, triggered the development in Sweden. The Swedish minister returned from Brussels being quite upset voicing his reaction in the daily press. He did not have a clue what “giftedness” was and he knew even less that it had its own specialised research tradition and education. He decided, however, to remedy the situation.

So, gifted education in Sweden has its origins not in the discovery of a forgotten group of children’s needs, but rather in the political embarrassment of being virtually the only country in Europe where high ability was still unknown (…and considered uninteresting!).

The result of this sudden awakening became a first project on addressing the needs of mathematically gifted children. Typically the project was not headed under the label of gifted education but rather under Mathematics Education, which remains completely uncontroversial to any Swedish political fraction. Inger Wistedt of Stockholm University took it upon herself together with a number of interested PhD-students to explore this territory in Swedish schools. These doctoral researchers have since then gained their degrees and are now quite active in promoting gifted mathematics education.

However, there was still no official recognition of high ability. This came with a change in political climate and with a change of cabinet and political ideology. In 2010 the Code of Education was amended (2010:800, 3§) and it now reads as follows:

"All children and pupils shall be given the guidance and stimulation they need in order to learn and individually develop so that, on the basis of their own potential, they may develop as far as possible in accordance with given educational targets. Pupils easily reaching the minimum curricular requirements within this educational framework shall be given guidance and stimulation to reach even further in their development.

In addition to this, the values underlying the entire school system were amended as well, and there is now — in tune with the current Zeitgeist — a demand that all teaching in schools should encourage an “entrepreneurial spirit.”

Education reforms and the arrival of advanced placement

Many and fundamental school reforms and other educational reforms, on all levels, have been launched since the new conservative-liberal coalition took power in 2006. No other cabinet in modern times has politically so changed Swedish education as has the cabinet currently in power. The reason for such a zeal to reform was the two latest PISA Assessments and other similar international comparisons. The achievements of Swedish pupils have plummeted dramatically on all measured accounts setting off very loud alarm bells in the corridors of political power and amongst the captains of industry, the result of which became an all-consuming effort to reform everything in a spirit of nigh-desperation.

One educational experiment was launched in 2008, engineered by the liberal minister for education, establishing 18 Advanced Placement schools with different specialisations throughout the country for highly able pupils in upper secondary education (year 10-12). In 2012 this experiment was extended to also include Advanced Placement for highly able pupils in upper primary education (year 7-9). Twenty-five schools with different specialisations throughout the country were given the right to provide such education. It is interesting to note that in these efforts no mention at all is made of talent, gifted or even highly able. These remain still politically incorrect terms to use. Instead, this is how the Ministry of Education and its National Agency for Education made, and continue to make, their appeal to highly able pupils (from http://www.spetsutbildningar.se):

First and foremost, you should have an interest in the subject, which each programme is focussing on. You need to be inquisitive and want to learn more. In addition, you should have your goals set to continue with higher education once you have graduated from the advanced placement programme. Needless to say, these programmes have been established for pupils with a certain aptitude for...
particular subjects. You will be given marvelous opportunities to develop your interest together with other pupils with the same interest and from all over the country.

Application for and acceptance to available placements is based on marks and the outcome of locally styled interviews. Interestingly, there is no pre-existing understanding of who these children are and what typifies them. There has also been made only a limited attempt to train teachers designated to instruct and mentor these children. The National Agency for Education regularly meets with these teachers for discussions and evaluations, but there are as yet no plans for systematic teacher training and preparation. The teachers themselves have expressed concern. They do not really know who these children are nor are they certain that they are in fact teaching highly able children and not simply very interested children, who are unable to achieve more than most other pupils. As far as I can tell, the frustration amongst teachers has been considerable. For this reason, I was invited in January 2014 to meet with them at the National Agency in Stockholm and give a lecture on “gifted identity”, which was well received.

**Interest and Aptitude Education**

However, gifted education, or perhaps more aptly termed, considering the continued political sensitivity of it all: Interest and Aptitude Education, in a way, remains a strangely underground movement. While political decisions certainly have given the all clear for schools everywhere to act in favour of high ability — in fact they now have to — very little is actually done to create foundations for gifted education by training teachers systematically, nor is there an effort made to inform the entire school system of what high ability is. The only implementation of the amended legislation is local. In addition, some local education authorities are taking the new legislation more seriously than others. A few are commendably conceiving progressively an inclusive and local system by which to address the needs of the highly able at all school levels. The Stockholm School Authority and the adjacent Nacka School Authority are perhaps the two leading LEAs with the most promising approaches, but there are others coming along, too. But, even though legislation is in place, attention to the highly able is still largely in the hands of local enthusiasts. These are now better informed than before, but they are few and they tend to continue to work under resistance, not legal but certainly cultural, ideological and practical.

**An unanticipated silver lining**

Psychiatrists and clinical psychologists have until very recently been entirely disinterested, and completely ignorant, of the unique problems sometimes befalling gifted children. No doubt has this been at the detriment of these children having had to face the very unfortunate reality of being both misunderstood and misdiagnosed by health professionals. However, one single school psychologist, from a small and rural mid-Swedish town: Anita Kullander, took on the entire community of Swedish school psychologists by means of social media, spreading pertinent information, starting restricted discussion forums for psychologists only, and generally using Facebook as a resource to meet people with a need in this field. It has been very successful and knowledge of twice-exceptiality and clinical practice with and for gifted children has spread more effectively than what perhaps a slow-constructed policy, run by an entire bureaucratic organisation, could ever have done. She was recognised for her efforts and given an award by the Swedish branch of Mensa.

This awakening amongst health professionals reached the Department of Social Medicine at Karolinska Medical University, Stockholm. As a result, Anita and I were both contacted and asked to produce and edit a special issue of Socialmedicinsk Tidskrift (Swedish Journal for Social Medicine) focussing on the socio-emotional difficulties of gifted children and on relevant clinical practice. We invited a number of suitable authors including a number of highly gifted individuals to tell the world how they experienced Swedish society from the perspective of being gifted. The special issue was the first writing ever in Sweden for health professionals regarding the highly able (with abstracts in English). It was published in early July of 2014 (www.socialmedicinsktidskrift.se). It is an open access journal and it is therefore available for download for anyone having a need or an interest.

And so the Swedish medical world has also accepted that there are special needs associated with high ability and for clinical practice there is new needed knowledge to acquire; knowledge so far not offered by professional training.

**Are neo-liberal values compatible with gifted education?**

Twenty years ago I would never have believed this development to be at all possible. It is very encouraging to finally see a change for the better. The last country of Europe to resist talent has at long last given in! However, I unwillingly find that I still have reservations. I am not convinced that this development is only beneficial! It is in equal measures disconcerting.

If you have not observed it already, above all, the Western World has left behind the ideals of education construed as empowerment for the individual by personal choice and interest. Western schools and education are no longer intended as the maker of dreams and intellectual curiosity. They have become industries: instruments for knowledge production with a very specific goal, namely to generate innovations, services, businesses and anything that might assist in yielding economic growth.

I would say nothing if our future were to be the result of children's own choices and interests, but education policies all over the world are trying their best to influence these choices by controlling very intentionally what schools and higher education should do and what future generations should prepare for. There is a desperate race in all nations to be “the best” in terms of STEM-subjects, since these, every politician seems to be convinced of, are our best bet to generate economic growth and welfare.

According to the World Bank “only educational spending that is immediately profitable is … justifiable and studies [such as] in anthropology and cultural studies

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Thinking of Giftedness or the Formation of Giftedness, that is the Question

LAILI SAKIJEVA, LATVIA
YULIJ MURASHKOVSKIJ, LATVIA

There is a legend about a tribe somewhere on the banks of the Amazon. Each morning their shaman performs a complicated ritual with dances and magic formulas. The tribe believes that the Amazon will stop flowing if the shaman does not perform the ritual or does it in a wrong way.

“Foundation ASNI” aims to create a system for educating gifted children in Latvia. When starting to lead the foundation, I had a sense of mission to realize a noble job for my country. However, I soon had a feeling that I was turning into the shaman from the legend.

By studying the experience of other countries and the relevant literature, I realized that the term “gifted” was not as specific as it should be. If there is no consensus about what being “gifted” and “talented” means, then ironically we can say – here is a free space for your ad.

The Education Law of the Republic of Latvia states that the goal is “to ensure that every citizen of Latvia develops his/her mental and physical potential in order to become an independent and intelligent personality”. “Every citizen” means “everyone” – including the gifted and talented.

In Latvia like in other parts of the world, the word “talent” is used in everyday life as a self-evident concept in its widest sense. The most common meanings are “an increased ability to perform some type of activity” and “an ability to repeat excellently something that is already well-known”. However, the economy and culture develop not by repeating something well-known (not denying the necessity of it either) but by discovering or inventing something new. By selecting and supporting only the good repeaters, we will not be able to deal with the overwhelming amount of mankind’s problems.

Acceleration, enrichment programmes, pull-out groups and other methods of gifted education are useful but they do not considerably increase the number of talented and creative individuals. Not because they were bad or wrong – not at all! Just because they have other objectives. We can use a spade for digging up the earth in our allotment; however, in large areas a tractor does it faster and better. We can improve the design, ergonomics and the public image of the spade but we have to understand that even the harvest from all of the world’s allotments will not be sufficient to feed mankind.

And yet, once it is not clear what giftedness is, will identifying gifted children and educating them in accordance with their specific needs be the right way of forming a talented society? I’m afraid not – it requires fundamental changes both in the education system and in our way of thinking.

Two years ago, asked if I knew what “TRIZ” meant, I had only a vague idea that it had something to do with scientist Genrich Altshuller. But it aroused my curiosity, and I started to investigate what this acronym stands for. Eventually, it turned out that the TRIZ theory had been developed in Latvia many years ago. So I invited Yulij Murashkovskij, the only TRIZ Master in Latvia, to share his opinion about giftedness. Here is what I learned.

Another approach

Besides searching for some “gifted” children, there is another approach which has been developed in Latvia for two decades; it has aroused interest in other countries as well. Methodologically it is based on the Theory of Inventive Problem Solving, better known by its Russian acronym TRIZ (in Russian – теория решения изобретательских задач) created in the second half of the 20th century by Genrich Altshuller. Today, TRIZ is turning into a science of talented thinking. Its ideology claims that there are no “gifted” or “non-gifted” people. The way of thinking – also talented thinking – is not biologically or genetically predetermined; it is a social phenomenon learned by a person in the process of his/her socialization.

In order to comprehend the nature of talented thinking, first we have to define why it is necessary, what its function is. If talented thinking is treated as an individual phenomenon, it is impossible to determine it; however, if it is treated as a social phenomenon, it can be done easily. Talented thinking is necessary for society so that its conception of the world can develop and change. It refers both to the natural world as well as to the world of culture in which we live.

More than 30 years of research have shown that talented thinking is a system of certain mental procedures which make us change our ideas about the world. These procedures are not artificially constructed; they have been identified in studies of the history of human culture – science, technologies, art, etc. We detect the problems that talented artists, inventors and researchers have undoubtedly faced. Then we study how these problems were solved and identify the methods that have advanced the emergence of new concepts. If these methods were employed in all the periods of time and in all areas of culture, they can be considered to be the procedures of talented thinking. In fact, it is a generalized experience of talented thinking of all the people of all times.

Let’s see how it works.

One and many

Example 1. In the middle of the 19th century, it was known that magnet acts only on iron and its alloys, but it was not clear why – in what way did other matters differ from iron? Michael Faraday suggested that a magnet acts on all matters, just in various ways and to a various extent. He confirmed his hypothesis by numerous experiments.

Example 2. Every city has its centre. The bigger the city, the bigger is the difference in the quality of life between the residents.
of the centre and the suburbs. To solve this problem, it was proposed to make several centres in one city.

**Example 3.** Emperor Penguins incubate their offspring far from the shore. The female lays an egg and goes back to the sea. The male clasps the egg between his legs and incubates it for two months. During this time he does not eat anything. The average temperature in Antarctica at that time is minus 50°C and lower. Though penguins have a thick layer of fat, it is not sufficient to protect them from freezing to death. For a long time biologists could not understand how penguins managed to survive and incubate their chicks. It was assumed that they retained heat by forming compact huddles. Observations confirmed this assumption.

These examples come from different areas – physics, urbanism, biology – but the method by which the problems were solved is the same – the application of considerations based on one object to a group of objects, to many. This method has been used so often that we can say with certainty that it is one of the procedures of talented thinking.

**Its Majesty, the Right Answer**

The main problem of today’s education systems all around the world is this: from early years onwards we are taught that there is the “right answer” to all of the questions. We just have to learn it, and all the problems will be solved. These “right answers” have been established by today’s scientists and specialists. The previous views were wrong: now we know the truth, and it will never change except that minor details will be defined more precisely.

As a result, independent thinking and even the desire to think on one’s own get atrophied. When I ask students questions the answers to which were not told them at school or cannot be found on the internet, some of them fall into a quiet panic but the others “switch off” and wait for the answer to be disclosed by me.

The right answer is the biggest enemy of talented thinking. It does not let us assume that concepts may change. It does not let us believe that we can change them. Nevertheless, it is possible to learn to search for solutions independently. It can be done using the procedures of talented thinking. Let’s try to solve some problems.

**Various problems, one procedure**

**Problem 1.** In the beginning of the 19th century, it was known that some matters conduct electricity but some don’t. Why? How can it be explained?

**Problem 2.** Fuel for ocean liners is very viscous. It is poured into tanks heated, so it is more liquid. However, it becomes cold very quickly and stops flowing to the engine. What can be done?

**Problem 3.** Provision of bank loans is a risky business. In order to ensure that a loan is repaid, banks ask for collateral – property, surety, etc. But how can a loan – even a small one – be received by poor people who have low income and whose property is illiquid, i.e., it cannot easily be sold in case of a loan default?

The tasks seem to be difficult. Usually people say that it is not their specialty or they try to remember the right solution. But those who know the procedures of talented thinking and are trained to use them solve such problems easily and with pleasure.

All the three problems can be solved by employing the procedure described above, namely, by moving from one object to a group of objects:

- M. Faraday suggested that all matters conducted electricity but to a various extent, and he confirmed it experimentally.
- They placed tanks on ships vertically side by side forming a big group – like a huddle of penguins – so that warmth was kept longer.
- The well-known economist Muhammad Yunus founded a bank that provided loans not to individuals but to groups of friends or relatives; this formed some type of security on the loan.

At present 18 procedures of talented thinking are known. Part of them are responsible not only for the formation of particular thinking skills but also for a person’s character and attitude towards occurren-

The theory of inventive problem solving (TRIZ) and the theory of talented thinking based on TRIZ let me believe that there is a way out of the shaman’s ritual situation. First of all, the definition of „talent” developed by these theories is based on a fundamentally new approach: talent is an ability to create new conceptions that are considerably different from the preceding ones and that open up new possibilities for mankind.

In the past when revolutionary changes of concepts occurred once in a hundred or two hundred years, the individuals who accidentally mastered some of the procedures of talented thinking were enough to meet the needs of the development of mankind. Today when such changes occur in a decade, it is not sufficient. Tomorrow when they will occur even more often, the need for such individuals will be extreme. The training of possibly many talented people should be started today.

Attempts to select “gifted” children began long ago but they have given few results – there have not been a significant number of a truly serious discoveries or inventions made. The situation calls for an essentially different approach.

There are no innate gifted children. It is our task to give the gift of universally talented thinking to all of them. Today it is possible.

Thinking – also talented thinking – is a complex social phenomenon. The procedures that form the system of talented thinking are neither genetically determined nor mystic; they can be learnt. Therefore, giftedness and talent should be formed, not searched for.

People dealing with giftedness and talent often use such phrases as “move out of the comfort zone”, “think outside the box”, “be creative”. In order for these slogans to be put into practice, there should be specific techniques of teaching how to think outside the box and be creative. The theory of

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talented thinking offers such techniques, and experimental classes give assurance that it is possible to teach talented thinking to children.

Some practical results

For the time present, the training of talented thinking takes place as isolated initiatives. There are some courses for children and seminars for adults. Three year-long seminars for Latvian young scientists have been organized. There are courses on the internet, too. We accumulate experience, develop training techniques and continue the research. A manuscript of a book on the principles of talented thinking is being prepared.

We offer the following programmes:

1. Introductory lectures – general information about the nature of talented thinking and the possibilities to learn it (4-8 hours).
2. Initial training – certain procedures of talented thinking, general training, certain principles of learning both for children and adults (40 hours).

3. Full training – all the procedures of talented thinking, in-depth training, practical work (120 hours).

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Searching for Successful Ways to Support Gifts and Talents in Institutional Education: nifbe

BIRGIT BEHRENSEN, GERMANY

Nifbe is the Niedersächsisches Institut für frühkindliche Bildung und Entwicklung; it translates into “The Research Centre for the Promotion of Abilities at the Institute for Education and Development in Early Childhood of Lower Saxony”. Directed by Prof. Dr. Claudia Solzbacher (educational science) und Prof. Dr. Julius Kuhl (psychology), the interdisciplinary research centre for the promotion1 of abilities (Forschungsstelle Begabungsförderung) deals with questions of elementary education (kindergarden, crèches, etc.) as well as primary education (primary schools). As part of the discussion around early education, the research centre focuses on a number of interrelated educational questions:

- abilities and relationships,
- self-competence and the development of self-competence,
- individual promotion,
- parents’ perspective on school and education,
- resource-orientation,
- inclusion and the support of gifted children.

The methods of research encompass a range of quantitative methods (such as questionnaires and online forms, statistical analysis), qualitative methods (such as personal interviews, group discussion, content analysis and grounded theory), as well as video techniques.

The focal point of this research is the uncovering of opportunities - within the given conditions as currently found in kindergartens and primary schools - that support each child according to his/her abilities; with particularly attention given to his/her individuality and personal needs.

The research centre is part of the Institute for Education and Development in Early Childhood of Lower Saxony (Niedersächsisches Institut für frühkindliche Bildung und Entwicklung; nifbe), established in 2007. The central aims of the institute are the development of key strategies in relation to the early years’ development as well as the creation of regional networks, and the establishment of interrelationships of key stakeholders who are working in the field of early years’ education and childhood development. For this purpose and across the geographical area of Lower Saxony, 4 research institutions are currently working closely with five regional networks plus one coordinating bureau to establish working relationships with universities, colleges and vocational training centres, as well as youth support initiatives, primary schools, kindergartens, and crèches.

Special importance is given to the interaction between researchers and practitioners through the development of mutual projects and workshops; attendance at and organization of seminars and international conferences; as well as through publications.

Stakeholders are motivated and brought together by very similar searches for answers on how children learn and how they are best supported in their emotional, social, cognitive and physical abilities.

The focal point of this research is positioned in Lower Saxony, therefore the website is written in German. However, first steps have been made to post English literature via the following link:

http://www.nifbe.de/info/service/downloads-english

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1promotion / to promote: The German words are Förderung / fördern; they cannot be easily translated. ‘promotion’ here means all educational activities that have the intention of supporting the development of the talents as well as the learning development of each child.
Obituary

Abraham Tannenbaum

RENA F. SUBOTNIK, USA

Teachers College, Columbia University Emeritus Professor Abraham Tannenbaum died on June 30th, 2014 at the age of 90. He served on the faculty at the College for almost 30 years beginning in the 1960s. Like other highly influential scholars, he left behind many former students and post-doctoral fellows who have populated gifted education as researchers and practitioners. Dr. Tannenbaum’s influence can be exemplified by his notion that giftedness is an expression of potential in childhood that comes to fruition in adulthood in the form of critically acclaimed performance or exemplary ideas.

In his seminal book, Gifted Children: Psychological and Educational Perspectives (1983), Professor Tannenbaum articulated his long standing work on the central factors that connect potential to fulfillment including: (1) g factor, IQ type intelligence; (2) special ability (particular area of high productivity or performance); (3) non-intellective factors including social, emotional and behavioral characteristics that enhance performance; (4) environmental influences such as family, peer, community and school climate; and (5) chance factors. Each of these factors continues to be explored and reinforced in the talent development literature.

In that light, one of Dr. Tannenbaum’s proudest achievements was to serve on the steering committee for the Israel Arts and Sciences Academy, a residential school that educates and trains gifted performers, visual artists, and scientists from every part of the Israeli society including Israeli Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Acknowledging the role of chance was a particularly original contribution to the thinking in our field. As framed in the model, chance was not viewed as always uncontrollable, but rather as something that could be capitalized on by nimbleness, preparedness, and mental toughness.

Before he came to Columbia University, Dr. Tannenbaum had been a teacher in the New York City Public Schools for 20 years, no doubt influencing his unforgettable teaching style. Although I have moved many times in my life, and in the course of doing that, had to discard many treasures, I still keep my notebooks from Dr. Tannenbaum’s classes in the 1970s, and the echoes of his ideas are prominent in my work to this day.

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