

**Excerpts from Illinois Association for Gifted
Children Journal
Spring 2011**

**Topic: Creative Learning and Problem
Solving**

Joan Smutny, Editor

**Contact Sally Walker, Executive Director of
IAGC at sallywalker@gmail.com for
information on how to obtain the entire
journal.**



Illinois Association
for Gifted Children
A Not-For-Profit Organization

JOURNAL 2011

IAGC JOURNAL FOCUS:

CREATIVITY

From the Editor's Desk 2
Joan Franklin Smutny

I. GENERAL PERSPECTIVES

Creative Thinking and Problem Solving for
Gifted Students in the 21st Century 3
Maurice D. Fisher

Creativity: The Belabored Topic 9
Elaine S. Wiener

Working Together to Create a Culture
for Creativity 11
Susan Rhodes

The Creative Classroom 14
Bridget Austen

II. APPLICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

Two Versatile Ideas for Inspiring Creativity and
Innovation in Science 17
Sandra Joy Casad

New Landscapes, New Eyes, New Media 20
Diane Witt

Botanic Art and Botany, Bridging Childhood
Creativity and Academic Science 22
Dorothy Clare Massalski

“Treasure Island”—A “Literary” Treasure Hunt:
How One Classic Tale Launched a Hundred
Creative Investigations 27
Carol Sandberg-Howe

Clowning Around: Nurturing Creativity in
Middle School Students 29
Vito M. Dipinto

Creative Genius Personified: The Art of
Roberto Innocenti 33
Jerry Flack

Creativity in the East African Context:
The Genius of Junk Art 38
Margaretta Swigert-Gacheru

III. IDENTIFICATION AND ADVOCACY

Gifted Children and the Detailed Mind 41
M. Mark McKee

Testing the Whole Mind – Educating the
Whole Child: I.Q. and C.Q. 45
Garnet Millar, Christine Dahl, and John Kauffman

Educational Advocacy for Gifted Children 47
Sylvia Rimm, with Barbara J. Gilman

Are Schools Underachieving in the Recognition
of Creative Underachievers? 53
Kathryn P. Haydon

IV. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Navigating in a Social World: Strategies for
Motivating Gifted Children 58
Tara R. Lenga

Creativity and Problem Solving: A Means to
Excite and Ignite Gifted Learners' Passions 63
*Stephen T. Schroth, Jason A. Helfer, Daniel O. Gonshorek,
Jordan K. Lanfair, Christian D. Mahone, and E. Karin Rudd*

That Morning Star Feeling 69
Pamela Walker Hart

V. POEMS

Poem for the Creative Child 74
Kathryn Haydon

Sparrow 75
Virginia M. Macagnoni

Creativity...the Gift in You! 76
Gail Arnold

2010 Torrance Legacy Creative Writing Award
Winners: Poetry 78

Gifted Education Press (GEP) — History and Current
Activities 86
Maurice D. Fisher

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Joan Franklin Smutny

For years in my childhood, I had this repeating dream. I would go to a beach and find a dilapidated organ abandoned on the sand. Somehow, I knew that I was supposed to sit on the bench and start playing. My feet reached for the pedals and my hands pressed the keys. As soon as I played the first note, the organ and bench rose off the ground. The dream always led me to a land across the ocean. I can still see the jagged cliffs with the conifer trees tumbling over the edge, the crest of waves crashing on the rocky shore, and a woman waving a bright red scarf on the beach. In my dream, I knew this woman. Sometimes in the dream, I played the organ ferociously over the waves, battling storms in staccatos and crescendos. Other times, I rode smoothly in legato where the open sun warmed my hands and the balmy nights unfurled their spread of stars above my head. But no matter what happened, I knew that I could not fall asleep because the organ would start sliding into the ocean the moment I stopped playing. When I woke up from this dream, I always felt refreshed, like I'd been to a far country and remembered something important. (Personal correspondence from a teacher)

I have included this childhood dream from a teacher I know because it expresses both the urgency of creativity as a dimension of human life and the perilous passage that awaits those who “fall asleep,” that is, abandon the very thing that transports them to the “far country.” The “far country” is of course where every gifted child wants to go. Imaginary worlds to explore, new lines of questioning to examine or mysteries to unravel are not just enrichment. As the authors in this issue reveal, they relate to the individuality of gifted children themselves, to the way they think, and to core questions of inspiration, motivation, and resiliency in life.

Certainly, creativity has never been more needed than it is today. Creativity has also never been more difficult to nurture in our students, or even in ourselves. Pressured from every side to “cover” the required content so that all students achieve minimum competency, teachers often feel that they can do little for the gifted learners languishing in their classrooms. What Toni Morrison has called “our busied-up, education as horse-race, trophy-driven culture” sets the tone and pace of our schools (1996, p. 13). And in this frenzied pace where teachers and students focus more on crossing the finish line than anything else, the lively art of teaching and learning slips away.

There are casualties from our “education as horse-race” culture, and creativity is certainly one of them. Another is the well being of a gifted child, as the great “Father of Creativity” E. Paul Torrance (1980) so often pointed out. He shared the example of exceptional first grader Tammy Debbins, a gifted student from the projects with an IQ of 177. She had an imaginary friend. The school did not understand Tammy’s needs and could not provide the kind of support structure that would have developed her abilities. This little girl who had discovered the power of her imagination at such a young age had no mentors or helpers to show her how to hold on to the gift she had. By third grade, Tammy’s academic performance had become average. Torrance reported that she never used her talents in later years and that her greatest frustration in life was that she wasn’t “very smart” (p. 152).

No one knew better than E. Paul Torrance that creativity relates not only to thinking and learning, but to *being*. The contributors to this issue also make the point

vitality clear. They describe the immense productivity of gifted students in a creative math, science, or language arts class. They explore the cognitive benefits students gain when teachers integrate the arts into the curriculum or the role of creativity in the social, emotional, or even spiritual well being of gifted learners. These authors know from experience how important the creative dimension is. For most gifted students, the urge to create is as fundamental as the urge to learn. This becomes apparent when we look closely at the circumstances in which gifted students thrive intellectually and emotionally. Almost always, they involve situations where high intellectual demand and creativity work together and where students apply their mastery of a subject to a creative endeavor. This endeavor may require divergent thinking, invention, intuition, or the “sensing” abilities that guided their earliest discoveries as little children.

Taken collectively, the articles here demonstrate the urgency as well as the possibility of bringing the creative dimension more fully into the lives of our students and children. They express what we all know about gifted learners: that they will never be content to learn, to understand, or to know without also bringing their whole selves to the process. These selves are creating selves, not stagnant or inert receptacles of facts and figures. Being essentially creative, gifted students will always ask us why or why not. They will always say, “Can I try this instead?” They will always startle us with their observations, press against our conventions, shake us out of our complacent views. And they will always look for the “far country” that beckons beyond the horizon. It is my hope that you will find in these articles the way to help them get there!

There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open.

– Martha Graham

REFERENCES

- Morrison, T. (1996). *The dancing mind*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Torrance, E.P. (1980). Growing up creatively gifted: A 22-year longitudinal study. *Creative Child and Adult Quarterly*, 5(3), 148-158, 170.
- [See also: Millar, G.W. (2007). *E. Paul Torrance, "The Creativity Man:" An authorized biography*. Scholastic Testing Services.]

Founder and Director of the Center for Gifted in Glenview, Illinois, **Joan Franklin Smutny** offers programs to thousands of gifted children from all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. She has authored, co-authored, and edited many books on gifted education, most recently, *Acceleration for Gifted Learners, K-5* (2007), *Igniting Creativity for Gifted Learners* (2009), *Manifesto for Gifted Girls* (2010), and *Parenting Gifted Children* (2011).

CREATIVE THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING FOR GIFTED STUDENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By Maurice D. Fisher

A *Newsweek* article of July 19, 2010 is particularly relevant to educators and parents of the gifted. "The Creativity Crisis" (Bronson & Merryman) discusses some of the current research on creative thinking. For example, Jonathan Plucker of Indiana University found that adult creative accomplishments had a higher correlation with childhood creativity than with early IQ scores. Urgent findings related to the current state of American education were reported by Kyung Hee Kim of the College of William and Mary, who analyzed Torrance creativity results collected over several decades. She found these scores began to significantly decline after 1990. The decreases were greatest for students in grades K-6. Why have creativity scores taken a turn for the worse?

Here are my opinions. The hey day of creativity training and research in America's public schools occurred from the 1960s through the 1980s. Educational leaders such as E. Paul Torrance, Mary Meeker, and Donald Treffinger developed many training techniques to improve creative thinking. Among them were brainstorming, warm-up exercises, divergent thinking exercises, and visual thinking techniques. However, after the high stakes testing movement gained momentum in the 1990s, the open-ended learning environments that encourage creative thinking were replaced with more structured, teaching-for-the-test classrooms. These highly structured, test-oriented learning environments have been particularly destructive to gifted children who are disposed to engaging in creative thinking activities and producing innovative solutions to problems. For now, the divergent thinking atmosphere emphasized by E. Paul Torrance, J. P. Guilford, and Mary Meeker is in limbo, having been replaced by classrooms emphasizing convergent thinking, and fortified by excessive multiple-choice testing and reporting. Another negative influence on creative learning has been the relentless march of mediocre and mind-numbing passivity caused by too many hours of hypnotic web surfing, watching television, and playing video games. The result is millions of passive learners indisposed to exerting more than a small percentage of their billions of neurons.

The *Newsweek* article also discusses how a middle school in Ohio is attempting to work around this anti-creativity atmosphere by incorporating divergent thinking

activities into statewide curriculum requirements and testing standards. The time for revolt against the test and retest curriculum seems to be at hand. Reawakening of creativity research and training is likely, given the current level of dissatisfaction with American public education. Schools need to offer more opportunities for creative learning, but (this time around) in the context of studying the humanities, arts, mathematics, and the sciences. The creative learning process must be seamlessly integrated with rigorous studies of major content areas including history, philosophy, English literature and composition, the arts, foreign languages, mathematics, and science.

I have been studying some of the current factors of modern life that educators need to take account of when designing such a curriculum. Clearly, this 21st century curriculum for the gifted should include all of the computer and internet developments that have occurred during the last 20 years. But it should also take account of some of the pedagogical problems produced by Internet technology because these problems have important implications for the types of students and citizens our schools will produce in this high tech age. At the same time, we must value the concepts of Western civilization which have been the foundation of our nation. These concepts have been a part of humanities education since our nation was founded in the 18th century. First, I will address the impact of the Internet upon gifted students' learning and neurological development, and how this technology is different in its effects compared to traditional classroom learning of the last 200 years.

The Internet: Is it an Appropriate Technology for Expanding Gifted Students' Creativity and Cognitive Development?

My Understanding of this technology's impact was greatly expanded by reading a book by Nicholas Carr entitled, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (2010). Well, it is clear from his book that the Internet is doing a great deal to our brains, and much of it is not helpful for in-depth learning and creative thinking. Carr begins by saying:

I can feel it too. Over the last few years I've had an uncomfortable sense that someone, or something, has

been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory (Kindle Locations 158-59).

Sometime in 2007, a serpent of doubt slithered into my infoparadise. I began to notice that the Net was exerting a much stronger and broader influence over me than my old stand-alone PC ever had. It wasn't just that I was spending so much time staring into a computer screen. It wasn't just that so many of my habits and routines were changing as I became more accustomed to and dependent on the sites and services of the Net. The very way my brain worked seemed to be changing. . . . (Kindle Locations 336-39).

All educators of the gifted should read this book. The author covers a wide array of intellectual, technological, and brain science research that is impressive in its historical perspective. It demonstrates how the type of thinking embodied in "surfing the web" is very different from the sequential thought and reading culture first developed during ancient Greek civilization. He begins his book by discussing Marshall McLuhan's famous analysis of modern communications technology, and its impact upon the human mind. Regarding this analysis, Carr said, "What both enthusiast and skeptic miss is what McLuhan saw: that in the long run a medium's content matters less than the medium itself in influencing how we think and act" (Kindle Locations 125-26). Some statements McLuhan made in his book, *Understanding Media* (1964), resonate today with the serious problems created by current technologies such as the Internet, cell phones, and computer games:

The medium is the message.

The electric technology is within the gates and we are numb, deaf, blind and mute about its encounter with the Gutenberg technology, on and through which the American way of life was formed.

Carr emphasizes that all technologies from ancient to modern times have had a great impact upon the human brain in relation to processing information and engaging in problem solving. The advent of written language and the subsequent widespread distribution of books (resulting from Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in about 1445 AD) had a revolutionary impact upon reasoning and memory abilities. The book and its variations, such as magazines and periodicals, have caused us to reason in sequential and logical steps and to pay close attention to the topics we are studying. This type of brain functioning has resulted in amazing achievements in all areas of the humanities and science. But as Carr indicates, each technology has its downside. In this regard, Socrates cautioned in his Dialogues that reading and writing technologies would decrease memory abilities which were essential for carrying on the oral language traditions and major ideas of ancient civilizations. It is incredible that works of thousands of lines, such as the Iliad and Odyssey, were recited from memory by Greek bards and poets.

Carr gives a fascinating account of the invention of symbolic methods of writing, beginning with the Sumerians and Egyptians, and the eventual replacement of these

cumbersome modes of communication with streamlined alphabets. The ancient Greeks were again in the forefront of making significant improvements by inventing one of the first alphabets (about 750 BC) based upon the phonemes and morphemes in their language. The author also discusses how maps and mechanical clocks focused people's attention on using symbolic technologies to understand geography and use discrete units of time. The point is that all of these technologies – maps, mechanical clocks, and the written word – had significant impacts upon the manner in which the brain processes information and solves problems.

Carr laments that we are now in an age, represented by the Internet and hyperlinks, which is detrimental to traditional ways of creatively solving problems that have existed for thousands of years. He gives the following example about how this new technology is affecting reading habits:

For some people, the very idea of reading a book has come to seem old-fashioned, maybe even a little silly—like sewing your own shirts or butchering your own meat. "I don't read books," says Joe O'Shea, a former president of the student body at Florida State University and a 2008 recipient of a Rhodes Scholarship. . . . (Kindle Locations 213-15).

The author backs up his concerns by explaining extensive neuroscience research on the way the brain adapts to the environment by establishing new synaptic connections of millions of neurons. This research has demonstrated that our brains have a high level of plasticity in forming new neural connections, based on the type of learning environment a student is exposed to. For many centuries students, including the gifted, learned to reason and solve problems in sequential and logical steps, as reflected by current brain scans of different areas of the brain. Neuroscientists have also shown, through their brain scans, that neural circuits go through extensive changes when students work on computers and the Internet. The behavioral research Carr discusses shows that these changes are not necessarily for the better – many studies indicate that students' memories decline in comparison to learning the old fashioned way by reading books and reflecting about problems. In addition, the multitasking behavior resulting from simultaneously viewing hyperlinks and reading email have a severe negative impact on student learning. Let me emphasize that Carr's book includes detailed discussions of this research by neuroscientists, psychologists, and biologists. I hope that all readers of this journal will become familiar with this research.

Carr is not the only writer who is very concerned about the effect of the Internet on reading processes and the way in which our brains interact with the environment. For example, Maryanne Wolf, the outstanding reading researcher at Tufts University, is particularly concerned with this problem as it affects children's reading skills and interests. Her book, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* (2008), should be a mainstay for all teachers concerned with continuing the culture of reading in the school and home. It presents beautiful descriptions of how children learn to read, and the neurological changes that must occur for a child to be a successful reader. Wolf has the following

pertinent questions concerning the effects of the Internet upon the culture of reading:

Questions about access to knowledge run throughout human history—from the fruit of the tree of knowledge to Google. Socrates' concerns become greatly amplified by our present capacity for everyone with a computer to learn very, very quickly about virtually anything, anywhere, anytime at an "unguided" computer screen. Does this combination of immediacy, seemingly limitless information, and virtual reality pose the most powerful threat so far to the kind of knowledge and virtue valued by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle? Will modern curiosity be sated by the flood of pat, often superficial information on a screen, or will it lead to a desire for more in-depth knowledge? Can a deep examination of words, thoughts, reality, and virtue flourish in learning characterized by continuous partial attention and multitasking? Can the essence of a word, a thing, or a concept retain importance when so much learning occurs in thirty-second segments on a moving screen? Will children inured by ever more realistic images of the world around them have a less practiced imagination? Is the likelihood of assuming we understand the truth or reality of a thing even greater if we see it visually depicted in a photograph, film, or video or on "reality TV"? How would Socrates respond to a filmed version of a Socratic dialogue, to his entry in Wikipedia, or to a screen clip on YouTube? (Maryanne Wolf, p. 77)

The problems discussed by Carr and Wolf go far beyond how the Internet affects thinking and creativity. As stated by Jaron Lanier, inventor of digital technologies and author of *You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto* (2010), they are related to the computer programming underlying "herd" activities such as Facebook and Twitter. His criticisms of this programming have important implications for gifted students' academic and social development:

Something started to go wrong with the digital revolution around the turn of the twenty-first century. The World Wide Web was flooded by a torrent of petty designs sometimes called web 2.0. This ideology promotes radical freedom on the surface of the web, but that freedom, ironically, is more for machines than people. Nevertheless, it is sometimes referred to as "open culture."

Anonymous blog comments, vapid video pranks, and lightweight mashups may seem trivial and harmless, but as a whole, this widespread practice of fragmentary, impersonal communication has demeaned interpersonal interaction (Kindle Locations 58-64).

It is clear that scholars, scientists, Internet experts, and educators are very concerned about the impact of the Internet (as viewed through email and the World Wide Web) upon the way we think and solve problems in a logical and creative manner. What are the implications of their concerns and research on teaching gifted students to be creative problem solvers? We must closely study the research and writings on the topic to remain up to date on current knowledge regarding

this problem. How? My best learning strategy has been to visit bookstores and surf Amazon.com for information on the latest books related to Internet use and student learning. I believe that many additional books will be written about this problem in the next few years, so your ventures through physical and virtual bookstores should reap many positive results. Here are some suggestions (starting points) for providing gifted students with a balanced leaning environment using the traditional, sequential learning and reading approach with the Internet-Hyperlink approach to leaning:

1. For every hour that gifted students work on the Internet, they should spend an equal amount of time reading books and working on creative learning problems offline.
2. At least one day per week, they should close down their computers, and occupy their time with creative reading activities and play outdoors with their friends.
3. Discuss with gifted students the similarities and differences of learning to solve problems by working on the Internet versus doing old-fashioned library research and writing papers without reference to the World Wide Web and associated hyperlinks.
4. Seek a balance between using the old learning technologies, such as reading a book, engaging in library research, and making oral classroom reports, and searching the Internet.
5. Have students compete as teams to work on creative learning projects. One team would use the traditional methods listed above while the other team would primarily rely on the information they obtain from the World Wide Web. Have the teams compare notes concerning the pros and cons of these different approaches to learning.
6. One of the biggest criticisms of the Internet made by both Nicholas Carr and Maryanne Wolf is that it discourages in-depth learning of school subjects. Assign students a topic that has an enormous amount of available information such as the Civil War or World War Two. Ask them to compare the depth of information they acquire from books and libraries versus the Internet.

Some Good Things about the Internet: A Revolutionary Technology for Increasing Parent and Teacher Awareness about the Gifted Education Field

Educators and parents need to use the Internet in ways that expand their creativity and imaginations. As an example, I will describe what it has done for my work in the gifted education field, and how this has helped parents and teachers to be more creative in educating gifted children. About six years ago, I decided to make *Gifted Education Press Quarterly* available through the World Wide Web to anyone who wanted to read it. Prior to 2004, we had about 1,000 subscribers to the hard copy issues, whereas today there are over 16,000 online subscribers – and this number is steadily increasing. Anyone who asks will receive a free online subscription to GEPQ. The level of responses has clearly

demonstrated two facts about the relationship between the Internet and gifted education: (1) there is a much greater interest in this field than is apparent from studying other media sources such as hard copies of journals and periodicals; and (2) this technological resource has the potential to harness the interests of gifted advocates to achieve better and more lasting programs for the gifted. How we successfully use this potential is the riddle that has not yet been solved.

I was surprised and exhilarated by the robust response from educators and parents across the nation, as were many of my colleagues. Now, educators and parents had the opportunity to read articles by such luminaries in the gifted education field as Howard Gardner, Joseph Renzulli, Sally Reis, Virgil Ward, Donna Ford, Joan Smutny, and Susan Winebrenner. They could also read articles by less well known gifted program educators and young professors. It is my hope that these authors will stimulate teachers' and parents' creative thinking in the gifted education field.

There are many excellent resources available on the Internet, such as gifted education Listservs and Discussion Groups sponsored by state gifted organizations and by Yahoo Groups. Both the Hoagies' Gifted Education Web Page and the Davidson Institute for Talent Development Web Site offer outstanding services by providing useful information about the identification and teaching of gifted students. I have been a member of the Ohio Listserv for many years, and enjoy reading the discussions among members about gifted education issues in Ohio and nationally. The problem that we have today is: How can we best utilize these enormous electronic communications resources to sustain and improve the gifted education field? I am trying to address many issues in *Gifted Education Press Quarterly*, but have not reached a satisfactory solution concerning how to successfully organize educators and parents to obtain more funding for gifted education programs, and to provide gifted children with the best possible education. Individuals who constantly use the Internet (such as myself) need to creatively work through the problem of how we can transfer our access to individuals concerned with educating the gifted into a formidable advocacy group that will influence school board members and politicians. If we can solve this problem, the full potential of using the Internet in a creative problem solving manner will be realized for the gifted.

The Internet can serve as one of the best technological devices ever invented for achieving "Good Works" for gifted children and their parents. There is no greater positive outcome than using this electronic medium for helping the gifted; neither wealth nor recognition is more important than achieving this goal. To demonstrate the importance of helping teachers and parents to become better advocates for the gifted, I engaged in a creative learning project with Joan Smutny and her staff regarding the Spring 2010 issue of the *Illinois Association for Gifted Children Journal*. Beginning in the Spring of 2010, I agreed to make the entire issue available on the Gifted Education Press Web Site in order to provide an excellent resource on Gifted Child Advocacy (e.g., see Fisher & Walters, 2010). As of the beginning of September 2010, there have been over 14,000 hits for the PDF file that contains this journal, and this number should

progressively increase in the months ahead. How has this resource helped educators and parents to better understand some of the issues of gifted advocacy? I cannot answer this question, but I do know that this humanitarian effort has provided exceptionally useful information to all individuals who have opened the PDF file and perused the twenty-seven articles it contains.

Clay Shirky, an Internet guru from New York University, has recently published a book entitled, *Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age* (2010). He estimates that Americans waste about two hundred billion hours every year passively watching television shows, and that we spend ". . . roughly a hundred million hours every weekend just watching commercials. . . ." (Kindle Location 157). According to Shirky, these wasted hours can be productively used as a cognitive force for improving society. For example, this enormous cumulative time can be applied to creatively setting up humanitarian projects and helpful information groups on the Internet. He provides many examples ranging from charitable organizations to young people forming online organizations that actually do good deeds. The purpose of his book is as follows:

My previous book, *Here Comes Everybody*, was about the rise of social media as a historical fact, and the changed circumstances for group action that appeared with it. This book picks up where that one left off, starting with the observation that the wiring of humanity lets us treat free time as a shared global resource, and lets us design new kinds of participation and sharing that take advantage of that resource. Our cognitive surplus is only potential; it doesn't mean anything or do anything by itself. To understand what we can make of this new resource, we have to understand not just the kind of actions it makes possible but the hows and wheres of those actions (Kindle Locations 386-390).

The problem for educators and parents of the gifted is how they can effectively use the Internet and other media to promote the creative education of gifted students. Where will they be most effective in reaching the widest possible audience? By way of Listservs, the Web, discussion groups, blogs, or any combination of these resources?

Creative Humanities Education for Gifted Students

I started Gifted Education Press in 1981 to provide teachers with materials that could be used to teach the humanities to gifted students. These materials were in the form of books that covered such areas as designing a humanities based curriculum, using quotations by famous people to teach subjects like history and literature, teaching philosophy and logic to the gifted, early childhood education and the gifted, theatre and drama, and teaching Shakespeare to the gifted. Michael Walters wrote many of these books (e.g., Walters, 1996) and has continued writing about the humanities and gifted education in *Gifted Education Press Quarterly* and Gifted Education News-Page. His articles have ranged from discussions of using William Wordsworth's poetry to studying William Faulkner's great novels in the gifted classroom. In addition, we have published articles (e.g., Fisher & Walters, 1987; Fisher & Walters, 2009) that

provide many recommendations for teaching the humanities to gifted students.

Today, the humanities should be taught in a manner that integrates subjects into a comprehensive examination of Western civilization, and the history and goals of different areas of study. Gifted students need to be engaged in projects that use this integrated approach to learn and solve problems creatively. Unfortunately, humanities education is at a low point in America's schools. Our nation rests upon certain principles of politics and philosophy that have been developed over two thousand years. If our gifted students do not learn about these concepts, the future of our democracy will be in great peril.

Here are some of my suggestions for teaching the humanities in a creative manner:

1. Use quotations from great minds to motivate students to engage in further study of these individuals and the times in which they lived.
2. Examine the historical parallels and simultaneous developments that underlie different fields, such as mathematics, physics, astronomy, and biology.
3. Show how literature and poetry have been influenced by the sciences and vice versa.
4. Investigate the contributions of different ethnic groups to American society and culture.
5. Study the biographies of highly gifted individuals in the humanities, arts, music, science, and technology (e.g., see *Heroes of Giftedness*, 2009).
6. Compare the works of great American and international authors to determine how they addressed modern issues (e.g., politics, war, interpersonal relationships, and survival).
7. Analyze the effectiveness of different media, such as books, encyclopedias, and the Internet, in studying history, the arts, and music.
8. Compare and contrast great movies for the purpose of learning about different themes, various historical periods, outstanding actors, screenplay writers, and directors.

Obviously, these activities are only a small fraction of the types of creative learning formats that can be used in teaching the humanities to the gifted. All subject areas should have a synergistic relationship to each other, thereby producing a stimulating creative learning atmosphere.

Assessment of Gifted Students' Creativity

In order to determine the creativity levels of gifted children in a variety of learning situations, I recommend the use of behavioral checklists and problem solving tasks that allow them to reveal their imaginations and creativity. I developed the Fisher Comprehensive Assessment of Giftedness (Fisher, 2009; Fisher & Walters, 2004) as a way for teachers to rate children on various indicators of giftedness and creativity. This instrument is based on the idea that children exhibit various behaviors and characteristics indicative of giftedness and creativity in many different settings. Standardized tests provide only one of several unique educational and psychological opportunities for

demonstrating gifted behaviors. The student's behavior and characteristics shown in the classroom and in the home provide even greater opportunities for the demonstration and measurement of giftedness. The Fisher Scale has been designed to assess how the gifted child performs in the school and home environment. Standardized tests clearly have an important role in identifying gifted students. But to produce a more comprehensive picture of their strengths and weaknesses, I recommend that the Fisher Comprehensive Assessment of Giftedness Scale (2009) be used in conjunction with standardized tests to yield a broader picture of gifted characteristics and behaviors. The behavioral categories assessed by this instrument (with some examples) are:

ACCELERATED-PRECOCIOUS EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Early Reading – Reads without direct instruction from parents.

Clear Thinking/Reasoning – Clearly expresses ideas and events in logical sequences.

Artistic/Musical Abilities – Develops artistic works or plays musical instruments.

APPLIED MOTIVATION, INTEREST, BEHAVIOR AND LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS, AND CREATIVE OUTPUT IN THE SCHOOL AND HOME

Independent Learning – Engages in successful independent learning activities.

Questioning Attitude Towards Learning – Asks the teacher and peers numerous appropriate questions about topics being studied.

Creativity/Imagination/Inventiveness – Demonstrates imaginative, original, and qualitatively different work in writing, art, music, technology, and academic subjects. Produces outstanding creative products in such areas as the humanities, arts, and science.

Curiosity/Inquisitiveness – Strong interest in analyzing new ideas and products.

AESTHETIC PERCEPTIONS AND INTERESTS

Sensibility – Very aware of the nuances and gradations of different ideas, problems, theories, and methods in art, music, literature, history, politics, and the sciences. Produces writings, art, or scientific-technical and mathematical works/products which reflect this high level of awareness.

Interdisciplinary Attitude towards Learning – Seeks organizing principles, patterns, and relationships which cut across apparently discrepant topics and subjects.

The second recommended approach to assessing creativity is to present gifted children with a range of problems to work on, and to observe whether they produce creative solutions to these problems. Either teachers or psychologists could use this approach, and also ask questions to motivate students to engage in creative problem solving. One of my authors, Robert E. Meyers, has been writing books for many years emphasizing creative problem solving. As a former doctoral student of E. Paul Torrance, he has a long investment in improving gifted students' creative learning and problem solving. Here are some examples from his book, *Golden Quills* (2008), for observing and improving

creativity. This humorous book concentrates on teaching creative language arts skills to gifted students: “Riddlin’ - Composing Riddles; Like What? - Producing Original Similes; Devilishly Good Questions - Explaining Difficult Questions; Once Again - Paraphrasing Sentences; Tying Tongues and Spitting Images - Depicting Idioms; Our Loyal Fans - Listening and Looking for Clichés; Come Now, What Do You Mean? - Listening and Looking for Ambiguity.”

Conclusion

The opportunities for teaching gifted students to think creatively have expanded greatly since the first phase of creative teaching and learning occurred from the 1960s through the 1980s. As we enter the second phase, it is necessary to be very cautious in using modern technologies such as the Internet. These technologies have much to offer the gifted student, but they could easily overwhelm over 2,000 years of Western civilization’s progress, based upon reading books and the culture of reading. Maybe we should sit back and take a deep breath, and ask gifted students to engage in slow and reflective reading rather than engaging in daily routines of roaming the Web and click, click, clicking hyperlinks. John Miedema in his book, *Slow Reading* (2009), has made an interesting case for this approach to learning. He emphasizes that slow reading is particularly important in learning how to reflect upon and analyze the written word. To encourage creativity in gifted students, they must have many opportunities to engage in reflection. They must also learn to appreciate the importance of books amidst their Internet centered culture.

While working on his fascinating manuscript about book collectors, dealers, and librarians, Nicholas Basbanes interviewed Dr. Otto E. Bettmann, the founder of the Bettman Photo Archives, consisting of millions of photographs and pictures from around the world. His comments on the importance of the book are an inspiring affirmation of the lasting importance of print media in our schools and society:

“The Chinese have a saying that one picture is worth a thousand words, but I disagree,” he said toward the end of our second interview. “I believe that one word can be worth a thousand pictures. Pictures come to us as messages from the past, but there are no pictures that I really, definitely, can say that I love or find fulfilling, because they aren't quite substantial enough. It's all surface stuff, very superficial, and only reading allows you to penetrate the world. That is the power of the book.” (Otto Bettmann. From an interview reported in Basbanes, 2001, pg. 4)

REFERENCES

Adler, M. J. (Ed.). (1984). *The Paideia program: An educational syllabus*. New York: The Institute for Philosophical Research.

Basbanes, N. A. (2001). *Patience and fortitude: Wherein a colorful cast of determined book collectors, dealers, and librarians go about the quixotic task of preserving a legacy*. New York: HarperCollins.

Bronson, P., & Merryman, A. (2010). The creativity crisis. *Newsweek*, (July 19), 44-50.

Carr, N. (2010). *The shallows: What the Internet is doing to our brains*. New York: Norton.

Fisher, M. D. (1997). Differentiated multimedia computing: A vision of the future of gifted education. *Illinois Association for Gifted Children Journal*, 71-76.

Fisher, M. D. (2009). *Fisher Comprehensive Assessment of Giftedness*. Manassas, VA: Gifted Education Press.

Fisher, M. D., & Fisher, E. M. (Eds.) (2009). *Heroes of giftedness: An inspirational guide for gifted students and their teachers*. Manassas, VA: Gifted Education Press.

Fisher, M. D., & Walters, M. (1987). Using the humanities to develop a curriculum guide for the gifted. *Gifted Child Today*, (Jan./Feb.), 46-47.

Fisher, M. D., & Walters, M. (Spring 2004). Studying the individual gifted children as a foundation for identifying under-represented gifted populations. *Illinois Association for Gifted Children Journal*, 15-21.

Fisher, M. D., & Walters, M. (2009). Ten essential criteria for an advanced humanities curriculum for gifted students. In J. F. Smutny & S. E. von Fremd (Eds.), *Igniting creativity in gifted learners: Strategies for every teacher* (pg. 43). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Fisher, M. D., & Walters, M. (Spring 2010). Heroic advocacy for gifted students. *Illinois Association for Gifted Children Journal*, 51-58.

Lanier, J. (2010). *You are not a gadget: A manifesto*. New York: Knopf.

McLuhan, M. (2003). *Understanding media: The extensions of man – Critical edition*. Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press. Originally published in 1964.

McNeely, I. F., & Wolverson, L. (2008). *Reinventing knowledge: From Alexandria to the Internet*. New York: Norton.

Miedema, J. (2009). *Slow reading*. Duluth, MN: Litwin Books.

Myers, R. E. (2008). *Golden quills: Creative thinking and writing lessons for middle-school gifted students*. Manassas, VA: Gifted Education Press.

Shirky, C. (2010). *Cognitive surplus: Creativity and generosity in a connected age*. New York: Penguin.

Walters, M. (1996). *Humanities education for the 21st Century: Essays and reviews for gifted students and their teachers*. Manassas, VA: Gifted Education Press.

Wolf, M. (2008). *Proust and the squid: The story and science of the reading brain*. New York: Harper Perennial.

MAURICE D. FISHER is the Publisher of Gifted Education Press (29 years) in Manassas, Virginia, and a program evaluation and research consultant for the Fairfax County, Virginia Public Schools. He can be reached at 703-369-5017 or mfisher345@comcast.net.

CREATIVITY: THE BELABORED TOPIC

By Elaine S. Wiener

“I don’t ‘shar’ well!”

That’s what Jane said when she went to kindergarten. Her teacher wanted her to share the crayons with others, but Jane already had a sense of self and the courage to buck the system. Notice that she did not say no. She was not defiant; she was observant... and shared her observation about herself.

Jane is now an adult and a writer and still sees the world in creative ways.

Creativity as a topic wears thin. Everyone has a theory. We can start with E. Paul Torrance, who certainly is our first guru of creativity. Even so, I don’t think he ever saw his thoughts as the *be-all and end-all*.

It may surprise people that E. Paul Torrance had a learning disability. His embarrassment—even his shame—at his lack of non-academic life skills allowed him to be sensitive and tender toward people, including people with and without disabilities. Garnet W. Millar (2007), in his book, *E. Paul Torrance: The Creativity Man*, gives us some wonderful Torrance quotes:

1. “Know your strengths. Understand them deeply. Take pride in them. Practice, develop, use, and exploit them.”
2. “Learn to free yourself from the expectations of others and walk away from the games that others insist you play, even though you have no interest or aptitude for such games. Free yourself to play your own games in your own way in such a manner as to make the best possible use of your strengths, your potentialities.”
3. “Do not waste a lot of expensive, unproductive energy in trying to be well-rounded. Master the skills of interdependence, giving freely of your strength. What you give in this way is far more valuable than all you could give with mediocre performances of achievements for which you have no aptitude or will. People are generally highest motivated for the things that they do best.”

It seems obvious from the Torrance biography that the details of how passionate he was... how loving he was... how patient he was... how he internalized his hurts and pains into mature Zen-like understanding of human nature all came together to be what we now call a creative being.

A creative being? Could that be the term we use because we don’t have an apt and accurate definition?

In his biography of Albert Einstein, author Walter Isaacson (2008) thinks that it was Einstein’s creativity and not his mathematical genius that led him to his great discoveries. That kind of thinking involves seeing many possibilities, and it is those possibilities that eventually come upon solutions. That process is so complicated that trying to pinpoint a name for it forces us to accept the word “creativity.” That’s why we use it repeatedly. We don’t seem to have a choice.

But that still doesn’t help us pinpoint *what* creativity is.

Tim Brown, CEO of the innovation and design firm, IDEO, believes that the fear of embarrassment stops creativity. He thinks that children are playful because they are *not* embarrassed; they are engaged with possibilities. He reminds us that as we get older we forget *how* to play, and worse yet, as adults we self edit...which is *not* playful.

During a TED (small nonprofit devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading) presentation, Tim Brown talked about first graders playing with blocks, a way of thinking with their hands. He referred to one of his partners, David Kelly, who says that we all need permission to think with our hands. As Tim Brown summed up, he encouraged all of us to explore building and thinking with our hands and role play because that provides empathy. Above all, we need trust to be creative.

And just when I was getting uneasy with all this “looseness,” he reminded us that play is not anarchy; play has rules. That certainly is true when you watch children play. They are full of rules—rules already learned from parents and teachers and new rules they create on the spot. Then and only then, I could relax and trust this aspect of creativity. It *feels* right. It must be that I can see categories forming that make me feel secure. Tim Brown warned against this. He said that adults want to categorize to hem in the playfulness. (Help! I can’t let go...but I do want to.)

This specific discussion about creativity reminds me of previous discussions about gifted children who have been described as “out of the box.” For years now—probably decades—we have been worrying about gifted students who are “out of the box.” I’m sure there are multiple meanings for thinking “out of the box,” but most of us would agree that the common definition is a human being who thinks *creatively* or sees things in ways apart from the mainstream. Our focus in gifted education has been to ensure a nourishment of creative thinking—as well it should.

We have elegant examples of geniuses who thought “out of the box.” To a degree, however, one has to know what is *in the box* to be able to go *out of the box*. Bertrand Russell, British philosopher, logician, essayist, and social critic was known to be a “free thinker.” (Today, we might call that a *creative thinker*.) However, Bertrand Russell had a classical education before he pushed off into unique worlds of contemplation.

Sometimes, regardless of the degree of giftedness, some of our children have learning deficits. This adds to the complexity of an “in-the-box-out-of-the-box” issue. These deficits can be natural—developmental—or they can be “learned” deficits, meaning habits ignored and not practiced or simply not taught. These children “sound” so gifted when they speak that they, their parents, and sometimes teachers and supervisors are resistant to anything as mundane as practicing a body skill. The brain cannot do the physical work of writing, for example. It is easy for a gifted child to

speak smart; it is not as easy to “do” smart. (How do we separate the creativity here from the usual aspects of underachievement: Is it the cause or the result, or irrelevant to the whole issue?)

When such life skills are ignored and met with the attitude, “Oh what’s a little messy writing or poor phonics test; our children are out of the box,” we are faced with a pervasive mindset that will create gifted children who can think but not function, who can create but not apply. Our world needs gifted people who can live productively themselves as well as contribute to their society. Could it be that some of us educators have “gone over the edge” about “out of the box?”

And could it be that we name these underdeveloped skills as “creativity” to rationalize the lack of training or the need to label children as gifted or creative who are not?

In *Sparks of Genius: The 13 Thinking Tools of the World’s Most Creative People*, Robert and Michele Root-Bernstein (1999) quote my favorite author, Eric Hoffer: “Creativity is the ability to introduce order into the randomness of nature.”

Their observation that “creative thinking in all fields occurs pre-verbally, before logic or linguistics come into play, manifesting itself through emotions, intuitions, images, and bodily feelings” is fascinating to me.

There are many books written about creativity, but the authors of *Sparks of Genius* believe that there are untapped insights about creative thinkers by creative thinkers—thus *this* book. It was quite a research task. Reading it was quite a task, too. If creativity is your focus in life, you will want to own *Sparks of Genius*. If understanding creativity is not your life’s aim but you would like a reference book of what many great minds thought about their own intuitive abilities, you will also want to own this book.

The “common set of thinking tools at the heart of creative understanding [are] observing, imaging, abstracting, recognizing patterns, analogizing, body thinking, empathizing, dimensional thinking, modeling, playing, transforming, and synthesizing.”

Now when you look closely at these words, you see the history of education. These are words used in other systems, theories, or taxonomies. However, each of these verbs becomes a whole, detailed chapter that goes into great depth, using eminent thinkers’ ideas and descriptions of their own intuitive abilities. This is fascinating, although there is never a pure definition or explanation of creativity that’s free of so much complexity and nitpicking. Obviously, that’s because no one can clarify it, try as they may.

Eric Hoffer is so right: order and randomness are perfect words for this subject. Pinpointing creativity is like watching a cat scramble out of the way, slinky and beautiful, but unpredictable.

At the exact minute on the very day that I was re-reading *Sparks of Genius*, the Christian Science Monitor e-mailed two articles about education. One was written by Alexandra Marks, “One City, One Curriculum,” about New York City schools reforming its curriculum to a very prescribed, uniform program for the whole city—so prescribed that teaching methods and the placement of desks were included in the master plan.

Contrasting this was an article written by Linda Baker, “Chinese Schools Get Creative,” which described China’s attempt to restructure its system to “stress creative thinking and local control” where the teacher’s job is to “promote, cooperate, and guide.”

Do you see where this is going? Why can’t education ever get it right and sure and thorough? Could it be that children—human beings—are multifaceted and have multi-needs? Therefore no one system works for all. Why can’t we ever balance this high wire act? Isn’t it possible that children need structure *and* creativity regardless of their style?

As if the literature gods were watching this article being written, *Newsweek* (July 12, 2010) published an article called “Forget Brainstorming,” an off shoot of their July 10, 2010 article about Creativity. With their typical *Newsweek* succinctness, they pinpointed exactly what to do:

1. Don’t tell someone to “be creative.”
2. Get moving. (Exercise.)
3. Reduce screen time. (TV, games, etc.)
4. Explore other cultures. (Cross-cultural experiences force people to adapt.)
5. Follow a passion.
6. Ditch the suggestion box. (The formality stifles and is seen as bureaucracy. Allow employees to implement their ideas.)

With these more practical, non-academic ideas—and luckily for them, lacking the need for a definition—I was ready to delve into a 544-page book about creativity. That’s like plunging into a black hole; it’s such an impossible topic. However, Dr. Jane Piirto (2004), author of *Understanding Creativity*, beat me to my thoughts. In the most precise, organized manner, with scrupulous clarity, she acknowledged this dilemma and gathered together what seems to be all the information in the universe about creativity with the purpose of helping us to appreciate the complexity of this subject. She says that “everyone is creative and those who are more creative have learned to be so.” Perhaps part of *being* creative is *perceiving* that you are. Doesn’t that seem too simple?

It would also help to remind ourselves that even creativity depends upon old fashioned work to help it along. A. A. Milne knew that when he said, “Ideas may drift into other minds, but they do not drift my way. I have to go and fetch them. I know no work manual or mental to equal the appalling heart-breaking anguish of fetching an idea from nowhere.” Now who couldn’t relate to that!

In the end, those of us who are not so sure that we are creative can simply go on admiring others who are. And that would be such a joy to the world...with or without the definition of what qualifies as *creativity*.

In the end, it really doesn’t matter, does it!

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- Isaacson, W. (2008). *Einstein: His life and universe*. New York: Simon & Schuster. [paperback, \$5.60 (bargain price), 704 pp, ISBN-10: 0743264746]
- Millar, G.W. (2007). *E. Paul Torrance: The creativity man*. Bensenville, IL: Scholastic Testing Service. [paperback,

\$47.95, 426 pp, ISBN: 978-1-933556-91-8]

Piirto, J. (2004). *Understanding creativity: A different approach*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press, Inc. [hardback, \$49.95, 544 pp ISBN: 0-910707-58-8]

Root-Bernstein, R., & M. (1999). *Sparks of genius: The 13 thinking tools of the world's most creative people*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. [paperback, \$16.00, 401 pp, ISBN 0-395-90771-3]

ELAINE S. WIENER is Associate Editor for Book Reviews for the *Gifted Education Communicator*. She is retired from the Garden Grove Unified School District GATE program and can be reached a 17elaine@att.net.



WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE A CULTURE FOR CREATIVITY

By Susan Rhodes

Take the next 30 seconds, close your eyes, and think about the most memorable school project that you completed. What was it? What grade were you in? Do you remember the topics of the research papers that you wrote? If you are a parent, what was the most memorable school project that your child completed?

My most memorable school project was constructing a model of a monastery built with sugar cubes and tiny boxes in the sixth grade with my best friend Ann. This project was completed in the days of no Internet and we had to make arrangements with our parents to visit the local library where we looked at pictures in books and read encyclopedias in order to gather the needed information. Dad helped with calculating the correct “scale” for our model. Mom scoured cabinets and drawers for a collection of supplies and made two trips to the store for more sugar cubes. Our surrounding garden displays consisted of small plastic flowers (no silk flowers in the 60s) carefully glued in place. Stained glass windows were cut from scraps of contact paper. For that particular weekend, the kitchen table was filled with glue, boxes, paint, toothpicks, cardboard, and sugar cubes. Upon completion, the realization dawned on us, how were we going to transport our masterpiece to school? It wouldn't fit in our family sedan. Luckily Ann's parents were able to provide the wood paneled Ford station wagon for transport.

What made that project memorable? How much creativity was involved? How much learning was retained? What conditions were present?

The reason I think I remember the sugar cube monastery some 40 years later is because of the creativity that was involved in the process. In Ken Robinson's (2001) book *Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative*, he describes creativity as “a systemic function of intelligence that can emerge wherever our intelligence is engaged. Creativity is a dynamic process that draws on many different areas of a person's experience and intelligence.” He goes on to explain, “Creativity is not purely an individual performance. It arises out of our interactions with ideas and achievements of other people. It is a cultural process.

Creativity prospers best under particular conditions, especially where there is a flow of ideas between people who have different sorts of expertise. It requires an atmosphere where risk-taking and experimentation are encouraged rather than stifled” (pg. 12).

Our job as educators and parents is to prepare our children to be successful for their future. Technology has drastically changed how the future of today's children will look from the vision of the future that I was prepared for as a child. I have been an educator for over 30 years. It was a likely expectation for my generation to be employed in the same career for several decades. That expectation is quite different from today's need to prepare children for a future in which they will change jobs every four to five years. How do schools make that shift? What childhood readiness experiences are needed for them to be successful in a rapidly changing world?

Traditionally, schools have focused on filling a child's head with content, making sure students acquire knowledge. My strong suit is not memorization. I remember spending a lot of time memorizing states and capitols, periodic tables, amendments to the Constitution, identifying leaves from plants and trees, bones from the skeletal system, the circulation path of blood through the body, and the list could go on if I could remember, but like I said, memorization is not my strong suit. With time, effort, and a lot of silly strategies, I was able to get an A on all of those tests. If I had to take a “pop quiz” today in any of those areas without the use of readily available tools, I would fail. Give me access to the Internet and I will pass with flying colors. Asking students to take tests without giving them the proper tools is like asking a carpenter to build a house without using his/her hammers and saws.

In preparing our children for their future, schools no longer have the luxury to spend inordinate amounts of time on learning facts and low level thinking skills. Research is clear that to significantly increase student achievement, children need to be engaged in higher order thinking skills as much as possible. Our continued success as a nation to be a

2011 Torrance Legacy Visual Arts Awards

Pick up your paintbrush, mallet, or camera
and showcase your creativity!

*Students in grades 2 through 12 are invited to submit photographs
of original paintings, prints, sculptures, or photographs.*

*Winning entries will be published in the first annual
Torrance Legacy Visual Arts Awards Collection.*



DESCRIPTION: Students are invited to submit their finest creative work to help celebrate the great legacy of educator and creativity pioneer Dr. E. Paul Torrance, author of more than 2,000 tests, articles and books.

ACCEPTED GENRES: Students may submit photographs of any 2D or 3D visual art, including without limitation painting, collage, printmaking, photography, sculpture, ceramics, or other related work. Submissions may focus on one of the following creative themes: *Magic of Adventure; Serendipity; Beyond the Horizon; Unexpected Answers; Nothing Set in Stone; and Creating Solutions*. Students are encouraged to freely interpret these themes. Please note that you must submit a photographic representation of your work of art. Students may apply to both the creative writing competitions. Each student may submit only one submission for the category of 2D or 3D art or both.

ELIGIBILITY: Students in grades 2 through 12. Please note, participants need not be enrolled in gifted programs. Students will compete in one of four divisions: 2nd & 3rd grades; 4th & 5th grades; 6th, 7th & 8th grades; or 9th through 12th grades.

DEADLINES: We will begin accepting submissions on January 15, 2011. All submissions must be postmarked by August 15, 2011.

SPONSORS: The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC); The National Association for Gifted Children Creativity Network; The National Association for Gifted Children Arts Network; The Torrance Center for Creativity and Talent Development; the Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPI), Ignite Creative Learning Studio; Knox College, The Center for Gifted, a Northern Illinois University partner; and Scholastic Testing Service, Inc. (STS).

RULES, SUBMISSION GUIDELINES and TIPS: Please contact Stephen Schroth at 309.341.7347 or by E-mail at torrancelegacy@knox.edu or Jason Helfer at 309.341.7206 with any questions. Please visit <http://www.knox.edu/torrancelegacy> for official rules, entry guidelines, and tips for creating a winning entry.

www.ststesting.com/torrance

2011 Torrance Legacy Creative Writing Awards

Pick up your pen or compose at your keyboard
and showcase your creativity!



Students in grades 2 through 12 are invited to submit original stories and/or poems. Winning entries will be published in the third annual Torrance Legacy Creative Writing Awards Collection.

DESCRIPTION: Students are invited to submit their finest creative work to help celebrate the great legacy of educator and creativity pioneer Dr. E. Paul Torrance, author of more than 2,000 tests, articles, and books.

ACCEPTED GENRES: Poetry and short story submissions may focus on one of the following creative themes: *Magic of Adventure*; *Serendipity*; *Beyond the Horizon*; *Unexpected Answers*; *Nothing Set in Stone*; and *Creating Solutions*. Students are encouraged to freely interpret these themes. Please note that there is a 1,250 word limit for stories. There is no prescribed word limit for poems. Only one story and/or one poem will be accepted from each student.

ELIGIBILITY: Students in grades 2 through 12. Please note, participants need not be enrolled in gifted programs.

DEADLINES: We will begin accepting submissions on **January 15, 2011**. All submissions must be postmarked by **August 15, 2011**.

SPONSORS: The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), The National Association for Gifted Children Creativity Network, the Torrance Center for Creativity and Talent Development, the Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPI), Ignite Creative Learning Studio, Knox College, The Center for Gifted, a Northern Illinois University partner, and Scholastic Testing Service, Inc. (STS).

RULES, SUBMISSION GUIDELINES and TIPS: Please contact Scott Rich at creativity@ststesting.com or contact Joan Franklin Smutny at 847.256.1220 or by email at joanfsm@aol.com with any questions. Please visit www.ststesting.com/torrance for official rules, entry guidelines and tips for creating a winning entry.

www.ststesting.com/torrance

GIFTED EDUCATION PRESS (GEP) — HISTORY AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

By Maurice D. Fisher, Publisher

I started Gifted Education Press in 1981 with the goal of publishing books that would help educators to teach humanities subjects to gifted students. Books published during the 1980s concentrated upon teaching such subjects as history, philosophy, English and American literature, Shakespeare, Drama, and the Arts in a differentiated curriculum. Dr. Michael Walters wrote many of these books and made significant contributions to *Gifted Education Press Quarterly* and Gifted Education News-Page. My wife Eugenia has provided constant support during the last 30 years through her editorial work and organizational skills.

During the 1990s, new authors wrote about teaching mathematics, science, and technology. GEP has continued to publish additional books on these topics, and also on homeschooling and teaching language arts to the gifted. Over the last 30 years, I have been privileged to work with many talented and knowledgeable authors who have written over 50 books.

In 1987, I saw the need to publish a periodical that would concentrate upon discussing problems and issues in the gifted education field. *Gifted Education Press Quarterly* first appeared in the spring of 1987. The current winter 2011 issue was recently sent to about 15,600 online subscribers. Educators and parents from all areas of the gifted field have written articles for this periodical including such luminaries as Virgil Ward, Harry Passow, John Feldhusen, Joseph Renzulli, Howard Gardner, Joan Smutny, Donna Ford, Sally Reis, and Dorothy Sisk. I am very proud that many of the contributors to *GEPQ* have been young professors and teachers who have directed their enthusiasm and energy to writing excellent articles on identifying and teaching the gifted. I have always emphasized publishing high quality articles — these young people have shown high writing standards in abundance.

In July 1991, I started a new periodical, *Gifted Education News-Page*, published bimonthly during the last 20 years. Each issue is two pages, front-to-back. Most articles are book reviews, essays on the humanities (usually by Dr. Walters), and discussions of different topics, such as encouraging creativity in the classroom and technology education for the gifted. The current issue (No. 116) includes a discussion of *Manifesto of the Gifted Girl* (2010) by Joan Smutny and Dr. Walters' essay on the great English poet, William Wordsworth.

Please see detailed information about our books, *Gifted Education Press Quarterly* and *Gifted Education News-Page* on the GEP Web Site: www.GiftedEdPress.com or contact me at Gifted@GiftedEdPress.com. Send me an email if you have an idea for a new book or article. May you have much success in educating our greatest natural resource, the gifted children of America!



Illinois Association for Gifted Children Journal 2011

Editor: Joan Franklin Smutny (joanfs@aol.com)

Associate Editors: Sarah von Fremd and Maria Freeman (mariafreeman@comcast.net)

Photographers: Doris Sanford and Scott Sanford

Website: iaggifted.org

Why YOU should belong...

- ◆ NAGC disseminates information to school personnel, public officials, parents, and the media related to the nature and education of gifted students.
- ◆ NAGC serves as a public advocate concerning the needs of gifted students.
- ◆ NAGC promotes research and development on the nature and education of gifted children at all ages and education levels.
- ◆ NAGC encourages and assists the development of state and local organizations that support gifted education.
- ◆ NAGC produces an annual education convention for more than 3,500 attendees on current trends, research, and new programs in the field of gifted education.
- ◆ NAGC educates parents to help them ensure that their children's needs are met at home and in school.

Member Benefits

- ◆ *Gifted Child Quarterly* magazine AND/OR *Parenting for High Potential* magazine
- ◆ *Communiqué* newsletter, including updates on federal legislation, parent and public information, and announcements of upcoming events
- ◆ A public education liaison in Washington, DC advocating for the needs of gifted and talented children
- ◆ Network for information on gifted and talented children and youth
- ◆ Discount on NAGC resource materials
- ◆ Discount on NAGC's annual convention

A Parent Associate Membership is available to parents and grandparents ONLY. This limited membership category receives only *Parenting for High Potential* magazine. Parent Associate members may join NAGC divisions.

PLEASE REMIT ALL PAYMENTS IN U.S. DOLLARS
CHECKS PAYABLE TO: NAGC Membership
 1707 L Street, NW, Ste. 550
 Washington, DC 20036
 202/785-4268

Name _____

Address _____

(Home Address only for Parent Associate Membership)

City/State/Zip _____

Work Telephone () _____

Home Telephone () _____

E-Mail _____

Check one; Teacher Professor Parent
 Administrator Counselor Consultant
 Coordinator Other _____

New Renewal (# _____)

Referred by: _____

(Please print)

PLEASE NOTE: Institutional Membership includes a discount for only one (1) attendee at the NAGC Annual Convention. NAGC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and your donation is tax deductible to the extent the law allows.

PLEASE NOTE: You must indicate which magazine you prefer. If no box is checked you will receive GCQ only.

1) U.S. MEMBERSHIP

OPTION

	<input type="checkbox"/> GCQ or <input type="checkbox"/> PHP	<input type="checkbox"/> Both Magazines
1 Year Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 80.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 100.00
1 Year Institutional	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 80.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 100.00
2 Year Ind. or Inst.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 155.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 193.00
3 Year Ind. or Inst.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 230.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 287.00
Life Member (Ind. only)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 800.00	
Parent Associate (Limited*)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 25.00	<small>(receive PHP only)</small>
Graduate Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 40.00	<small>(receive GCQ only)</small>

Graduate Advisor's Signature _____

Name of School _____

CANADIAN/FOREIGN MEMBERSHIP

1 Year Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 90.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 115.00
1 Year Institutional	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 90.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 115.00
2 Year Ind. or Inst.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 175.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 220.00
3 Year Ind. or Inst.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 260.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 330.00

2) DIVISIONS (\$10 per Division per year)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computers & Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood | <input type="checkbox"/> Research & Evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conceptual Foundations | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Populations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling & Guidance | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Grades | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Schools/Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent & Community | |

1) MEMBERSHIP \$ _____

2) DIVISION TOTAL \$ _____

3) DONATION \$ _____

GRAND TOTAL (1, 2 & 3) \$ _____

Check # _____

*(personal checks only for Parent Associate Members)

Purchase Order # _____

*(not accepted for Parent Associate Members)

VISA MasterCard Expiration Date _____

Credit Card # _____

Signature _____

I do not wish to have my name used for other mailing lists.



Illinois Association for
 Gifted Children
 800 E. Northwest Highway, Suite 610
 Palatine, IL 60074

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Palatine P & CD, IL
 Permit No. 2252



IAGC VISION

It is the vision of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children that the diverse expressions of gifts and talents of all individuals are valued by society.

Responsibility for nurturing, encouraging, and supporting the full development of potential in children and youth is accepted and shared by their families, educators, and communities. Individuals value themselves and their accomplishments. Their contributions are celebrated by society.

Goals

- ◆ To promote advocacy efforts that benefit gifted and talented children by establishing an effective political network.
- ◆ To develop standards of quality for what teachers and other professionals need to know about educating children with gifts and talents.
- ◆ To develop standards to evaluate the appropriateness of programs and services which affect the lives of children with gifts and talents.
- ◆ To foster professional growth of educators by providing opportunities to learn about standards of quality for understanding and teaching children with gifts and talents.
- ◆ To network with others by disseminating news and information to educators and parents through regular communication in the form of a newsletter, journal and the Internet.
- ◆ To work cooperatively with the Illinois State Board of Education, universities, and other organizations that serve children with gifts and talents.

For more information, contact us at:

IAGC
 800 E. Northwest Highway, Suite 610
 Palatine, IL 60074
 Tel: (847) 963-1892 Fax: (847) 963-1893
 Website: iagcgifted.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Circle One: Family Coordinator Administrator
 Teacher University Other

Mail will be sent to this address:

Title: Ms. Mrs. Mr. Dr. Other

Name _____

Home Add. _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

County _____

Home Phone () _____

FAX () _____

E-mail () _____

District Name/No. _____

School/Office _____

Position _____ Gr. Lv. _____

School/Office Add. _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

County _____

School Phone () _____

FAX () _____

E-mail () _____

Our membership list may be given or sold to outside groups.

Please check this box if you want your name excluded from this list.

We urge you to consider making an additional DONATION to IAGC to assist in our committee work. IAGC is a 501(C)3 non-profit organization and your donation is tax deductible to the extent the law allows. Please help us to continue our committee work with your donation.

Donation \$ _____

ANNUAL DUES \$50.00 \$ _____

Total check (to IAGC) \$ _____

Mail to: IAGC
 800 E. Northwest Highway, Suite 610
 Palatine, IL 60074