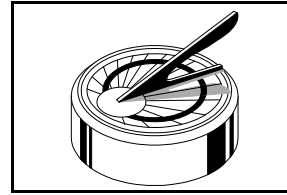


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Best wishes for a successful 2003-04 school year. May your programs for the gifted show significant improvements. Dr. E. Paul Torrance passed away in July. While teaching courses to graduate educators, I used many of his writings to demonstrate the importance of nurturing creativity in gifted students. His books had many practical examples of how to develop systematic lessons using brainstorming and other creativity techniques. This was in the 1980s when the gifted field seemed more open to new ideas. I also explained Torrance's program for the educational development of gifted minority students. This was a period when educators were just starting to identify these students for gifted programs. Torrance's ideas and enthusiasm had a great influence on teachers everywhere. Now, schools are measuring student progress mainly with high stakes tests. As an antidote, teachers and parents should study and apply Torrance's writings to broaden their understanding of giftedness and creativity. In this regard, please see the following web site: <http://www.coe.uga.edu/torrance>.

During the 2002-03 school year our primary work in the gifted field was concerned with publishing science and mathematics books for public schools, home schoolers, and summer programs for the gifted. As an example, **Essential Chemistry for Gifted Students** (2003) by Francis Sganga was used this past summer as a required student resource (upper elementary and middle school levels) in the Summer Institute for the Gifted courses taught at Amherst, Bryn Mawr, Oberlin and Vassar colleges, and Drew and Fairfield universities. We expect continued interest in our science and mathematics books this school year.

Thanks to Dr. Ann G. Klein and her publisher, James Webb of Great Potential Press, for permission to include excerpts from **A FORGOTTEN VOICE: A Biography of Leta Stetter Hollingworth** (2003) in this issue. This is an excellent biography about the founder of gifted education. The fall issue also includes an article by Angela Watkins, high school teacher of the gifted, on her and a student's experiences with undersea exploration. It shows how this student used her knowledge and abilities to win a national science award. She composed the winning essay on why she desired to live undersea for ten days in Aquarius, an 82 ton vessel near Key Largo, Florida. Dr. William W. Purkey discusses his work on Invitational Education and its application to teaching gifted students. He is a professor of education at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and a co-founder of the International Alliance for Invitational Education. Dr. Michael Walters describes a recent exhibit at The New York Public Library that included original masterpieces by such literary giants as Dante.

**Maurice D. Fisher, Ph.D., Publisher**

## ***A Forgotten Voice: A Biography of Leta Stetter Hollingworth***

**By Ann G. Klein Eau Claire, Wisconsin**

**(Excerpts from the book published by Great Potential Press, 2002)**

### **Introduction**

Leta Stetter Hollingworth, who founded the field of gifted education with her studies and observations of gifted children, was born on the Nebraska frontier in 1886. She is best known for her work in the psychology and education of gifted children. She endured many hardships on the prairie, which may have given her great strength and determination to retain her pioneering spirit throughout her all-too-short life.

Leta Hollingworth's greatest intellectual passion was the study of children so bright that many educators mistakenly think they can learn on their own. In an autobiographical summary, she wrote: "I consider this one of the most important of all problems for the development of social science—the problem of how to recognize, educate, foster, and utilize the gifted young."<sup>1</sup> Through meticulous research and intense commitment, she invented ways to teach and counsel gifted children that are still being used today. It was Leta Hollingworth who first recognized that gifted children have unique social and emotional needs and that not all gifted children are necessarily alike, differentiating among the "high" and "still higher." She was instrumental in creating the first public school for gifted children in New York City, and she conducted the first longitudinal study of children above 180 IQ.

Gifted education was not the only area in which she lectured, studied, and published. She was intrigued by both individual differences and marginalized populations. She contributed seminal works on the status of women, adolescents, learning disabled children, children with special talents, and cognitively challenged children. Additionally, she was instrumental in the professionalization of both clinical and school psychology. She was a well-known public figure because of her writings in popular magazines and her talks on nation-wide radio broadcasts, and she was widely recognized as a vocal advocate for children and adolescents.

During her years as a graduate student at Columbia University, Leta Hollingworth published a chapter in a textbook, five articles, a master's thesis, and a Ph.D. dissertation. Ultimately, she authored nine books and more than eighty scholarly articles. Who better to be a founder of gifted education than one who was herself profoundly gifted? Who better to understand the social and emotional needs of gifted children than one who was herself so greatly impacted by her own intense emotions? The gifted children she studied, taught, and counseled were her soulmates.

Fifty years after Leta Hollingworth died, a conference convened in her memory at the University of Nebraska, her alma mater. Julian Stanley, an eminent gifted educator known for his SMPY program (Study for Mathematically Precocious Youth) at Johns Hopkins University, offered a toast in which he honored the two most significant researchers of gifted education in the twentieth century—Lewis Terman and Leta Hollingworth. He said:

"Whereas Lewis Terman...deservedly gets credit for providing the United States its first major tool for objectively identifying intellectually talented individuals in order to study them further, Leta Hollingworth took the next important step, to nurture them academically.... It took both of them working hard and largely independently on opposite coasts to get the movement started. Both were towering pioneers...paradigm shifters."<sup>2</sup>

Lewis Terman is deservedly well known today among psychologists and educators specializing in gifted education. He is known for his long-term studies of gifted youth and for the development of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test. Leta Hollingworth is considerably less well known. Although she achieved eminence in her lifetime, many contemporary psychologists and educators are still unfamiliar with her numerous and significant contributions to gifted education and psychology. Her work was marginalized, trivialized, and in many instances, overlooked entirely. For example, in *Terman's Kids* (1992), Joel Shurkin mistakenly refers to Leta Hollingworth as "one of his [Terman's] female assistants."<sup>3</sup> In fact, some of Terman's research assistants received their master's degrees and doctorates from Teachers College, Columbia University under the tutelage of Leta.

Her impact on future leaders in psychology and education was widespread. During the 1925-1926 academic year, for example, Leta inspired one particular student to undertake a career in psychology rather than the ministry. His name was Carl Rogers, the now famous

founder of client-centered psychotherapy, which emphasizes unconditional acceptance of the client as its cornerstone.<sup>4</sup> He found Dr. Hollingworth's class "fascinating, especially because she seemed to him to be so interested in children and people in general."<sup>5</sup> Rogers enrolled for a second course in clinical psychology with Leta. "It was under her supervision that I first came in actual clinical contact with children—testing them, talking with them, dealing with them as fascinating objects of study, helping to make plans for their welfare."<sup>6</sup>

Leta Hollingworth's influence reached far and wide. Why was she forgotten? It was partly the time she lived in. Carol Heilbrun suggests that the writing of a woman's biography presents a special challenge.

"While biographers of men have been challenged on the 'objectivity' of their interpretations, biographers of women have had not only to choose one interpretation over another, but far more difficult, actually to reinvent the lives their subjects led, discovering from what evidence they could find the processes and decisions, the choices and the unique pain, that lay beyond the life stories of these women."<sup>7</sup>

Leta's story may be viewed in two ways—first, as a case study of one highly gifted individual's struggle to comprehend her world and to contribute to it, and second, as the life story of a woman psychologist and educator who attained eminence during the 1920s and 1930s despite obstacles placed in her path due to her gender. Leta Hollingworth struggled mightily to achieve her goals and was able to succeed despite being female. Eminent women of her day varied in ethnicity as well as social and economic status, but they shared one overriding life theme—they had fallen in love with an idea, and this passion sustained them more than any other. Leta Hollingworth clearly fell in love with the psychology and education of gifted children.<sup>8</sup>

She was a psychometrician—one of the few very early psychologists who developed and used tests to measure mental functioning, and she was enthusiastic about the new Binet-Simon test of intelligence and its successor, the Stanford-Binet. Like so many of her contemporaries in psychology, she believed that heredity was the primary factor that determined people's lives, and she was an advocate for eugenics, a term which is applied to selective breeding for humans. Despite living in New York City—one of the most diverse cities in the United States—for almost three decades, her friends were almost exclusively white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. There are even some small hints of anti-Semitism in family reminiscences of others about her. Yet she was ethnicity-blind when children were concerned. The subjects for her first experiment in gifted education (Public School 165) were overwhelmingly Jewish children, and she formed deep, emotional ties with this group of children that lasted until her death. In her P.S. 500 (Speyer School) experiment, she worked hard to ensure that the gifted classes were as diverse as possible.

After World War II, the "science" of eugenics was thoroughly discredited, particularly since Nazi atrocities had been based upon eugenic theory. Attempts to selectively breed a master race and the systematic, senseless murder of millions of "defectives" (e.g., Jews, homosexuals, communists, gypsies, cognitively and physically disabled persons) would have horrified Leta.

Leta Hollingworth was not a saint; she was a human being. As repugnant as some of her beliefs were, they do not negate her academic accomplishments or her seminal contributions to the psychology and education of the gifted. Lewis Terman is similarly criticized today, in his case for favoring boys over girls in his studies and for not including students of diverse backgrounds. Yet he is still seen as making great contributions to the general understanding of gifted young people. In a contemporary review of Lewis Terman's work, Vialle makes the following observation that is as true of Leta Hollingworth as it is of Lewis Terman:

"The benefit of hindsight is invoked frequently in all manner of discourse as, with smugness, we denigrate the commonly held beliefs of previous generations. Our smugness is in essence an unwillingness to acknowledge that each of us is firmly anchored in time and space and that none of us can predict what succeeding generations will make of our attitudes and assumptions. Science is as much a part of this basic human frailty as any other endeavor."<sup>9</sup>

Leta Hollingworth's personal life, as well as her professional writings and actions, are rooted in the time and space of the late nineteenth century and the first four decades of the twentieth century. These were years of great social and technological changes.

At the time of Leta's birth in 1886, Sigmund Freud was thirty, Mark Twain was forty-one, and Susan B. Anthony was sixty-six years old. Composer Franz Liszt died that year. Only six years earlier, Wilhelm Wundt founded the first psychological laboratory in Leipzig, Germany, and Thomas Alva Edison invented the incandescent light bulb in the U.S. The telephone and the manual typewriter were new, and few people owned such amenities. There were no automobiles, airplanes, radios, or televisions. Grover Cleveland was President of the United States, and Queen Victoria ruled in England. Women could not vote, and an act of Congress made it a federal crime to distribute materials or devices relating to birth control or abortion. The great educator John Dewey, the psychoanalyst Carl Jung, the eminent psychologists Edward Lee Thorndike and James McKeen Cattell, the feminist author Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and the birth control advocate Margaret Sanger—all were contemporaries and acquaintances of Leta.

By the year of her death in November 1939, the world had changed dramatically. World War I was over, and the nation was mired in the

Great Depression. Franklin Roosevelt was in his second term as president, and World War II was underway in Europe and Asia.

In this re-telling of Leta Stetter Hollingworth's story, every attempt has been made to do so within the context of her own time and space. Describing, or as Heilbrun says, "Reinventing" the life of Leta Stetter Hollingworth begins with her encounter with an eight-year-old boy known only as "Child E."

## **Chapter 1** **A Child Called "E"**

*I perceived the clear and flawless working of his mind against a contrasting background of dull and foolish minds. It was an unforgettable observation.*<sup>10</sup> - Leta Stetter Hollingworth, 1942

When Leta Stetter Hollingworth was thirty years old, an eight-year-old boy totally changed her life. Later, she explained:

"It was in November, 1916, shortly after taking appointment as instructor in educational psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University, that I saw for the first time, a child testing above 190 IQ (S-B). I was teaching a course in the psychology of mentally deficient children, and it seemed to me that my class should if possible observe under test conditions one bright child for the sake of contrast. I asked whether any teacher present could nominate a very intelligent pupil for demonstration.

"Miss Charlotte G. Garrison and Miss Agnes Burke, teachers in the Horace Mann School, Teachers College, New York City, thereupon nominated the child who is called E.... E was presented at the next meeting of the class. It required two full classroom periods to test this child to the limits of the Stanford-Binet Scale, which had just then been published. E exhausted the scale without being fully measured by it, achieving an IQ of at least 187. He was on that date 8 years 4 months old.

"The IQ of at least 187 placed E in Galton's Class X of able persons, i.e., more than six "grades" removed from mediocrity.... This appeared as sufficiently striking to warrant permanent recording, since it would rate E as one in a million for statistical frequency, assuming "zeal and power of working" to be also abundantly present.

"I did not at that time have any expert knowledge of highly intelligent children. I had been working for some years in the hospitals of New York City with persons presented for commitment to reformatories, prisons, and institutions for mental defectives. I had tested thousands of incompetent persons, a majority of them children, with Goddard's Revision of the Binet-Simon Scale, scarcely ever finding anyone with an IQ rating as high as 100. This thoroughgoing experience of the negative aspects of intelligence rendered the performance of E even more impressive to me than it would otherwise have been. I perceived the clear and flawless working of his mind against a contrasting background of dull and foolish minds. It was an unforgettable observation."<sup>11</sup>

This experience was clearly a defining moment for Leta. Child E struck a deep, internal chord with her because she recognized that she had met a compatriot. Leta was as profoundly gifted as he. Well aware of the absence of research on profoundly gifted children, she then began to "look for children like E, to observe them with reference to the principles of education."<sup>12</sup> Her quest was to continue until her death in 1939. In the ensuing twenty-three years, she found only twelve children with IQs above 180 on the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, and she continued to be in contact with several of them for many years. It was in part because of Child E that Leta modified her research focus, shifting it from the study of the psychology and sociology of women to the "comprehension of the extent, nature and origin of individual differences in mental caliber,"<sup>13</sup> which later evolved into the study of giftedness.

What is giftedness? As recently as 1991, a group of prominent gifted educators met in Columbus, Ohio to discuss the concept of giftedness and "took issue with the widespread emphasis on performance and achievement in defining giftedness, arguing that the qualitatively different inner experiences of the gifted child lie at the heart of the phenomenon."<sup>14</sup> Incorporating the works of Kazimierz Dabrowski, Jean Charles Terrassier, Alfred Binet, and Lev S. Vygotsky, this group (now known as The Columbus Group) agreed upon a description of giftedness that provides a conceptual framework for this book on Leta Stetter Hollingworth's life.

The Columbus Group emphasized that giftedness is characterized by uneven—or asynchronous—cognitive development, coupled with heightened emotional sensitivities and intensities. They further agreed that the disparity between precocious intellectual development on the one hand and normal physical and skill development on the other creates inner experiences and awarenesses for the gifted child (and adult) that are qualitatively different from the norm. As Leta Hollingworth explained, "To have the intelligence of an adult, and emotions of a child combined in a childish body, is to encounter certain difficulties."<sup>15</sup>

This asynchrony and dissonance may create emotional turmoil and social isolation for people with profound intellectual and creative gifts. Profoundly gifted herself, Leta struggled her whole life to make sense of her unusual cognitive, social, and emotional abilities and

behaviors. From infancy, she experienced uneven emotional and cognitive development, coupled with the intense sensitivities that are so typical of highly gifted individuals. Her intellect and logic were more than that of others, but so were her emotions. She loved more deeply, hurt more deeply, and felt more deeply. The song of a bird or the sight of a glorious sunset often pushed her emotions to tears. The first time her husband-to-be kissed her, she wrote a poem about it. (Writing poetry became a life-long avocation.) A slight was rarely forgiven. A kindness was rarely forgotten. Hers was a personality replete with more energy, enthusiasm, sadness, outrage, empathy, commitment, and resilience than most people ever experience. But with her prodigious talents, Leta was also extremely emotionally vulnerable throughout her entire life.

## Chapter 2 The Lone Pine

*I shall never cease to rejoice that I was born on the limitless prairies, to grow up on their expanse means to see in long stretches, to scorn boundaries, to go free all one's life.*<sup>16</sup> - Leta Stetter Hollingworth, 1943

It is remarkable, given her childhood, that Leta Hollingworth was as resilient as she was. Perhaps her years living on the prairie helped her go free, as her quote above suggests.

Emotional and physical stresses were nearly constant during her childhood and early adolescence. In rugged prairie life, all families had hard times, but Leta's was harder than most. First, her mother died when she was three years old; then, her father deserted the family for quite some time. Raised for ten years by her supportive and caring maternal grandparents, Leta and her two younger sisters were then suddenly wrenched away from these caregivers when their father remarried. This stepmother terrorized and terrified the Stetter sisters in ways that were almost sadistic. Leta never forgave her father for abandoning his children to such a stepmother and for failing to intervene when she treated his children so cruelly.

Ironically, it may have been these stressors that shaped Leta's character in ways that promoted her path to eminence. Gifted children often develop coping skills—resilience, determination, and stamina—when living under difficult psychological conditions.<sup>17</sup> “It may be that the development of very high levels of talent and eminence require motivation and characteristics born from childhood tragedy and unmet, compelling psychological needs,” suggests Paula Olszewski-Kubilius.<sup>18</sup> If so, the traumas and unhappy times that Leta endured as a child may have had some redeeming value in the positive outcome in her adult life.

### Pioneers

The Nebraska frontier of the late 1800s was beautiful but also challenging, dangerous, and unpredictable. In many ways, it may have been an ideal physical setting for this young, profoundly gifted child. The rugged landscape and lifestyle no doubt fed Leta's imagination, curiosity, and creativity, for she found pioneer life invigorating, not intimidating. There were outlets for her intense physicality. She could race her horse for miles on the limitless wild grass prairie, unhindered by a single fence. This was one of her greatest pleasures. Highly gifted people are known to enjoy and sometimes crave solitude and isolation. The western Nebraska frontier of Leta Stetter Hollingworth's childhood, it seems, took hold of her psyche and never let go.

“I shall never cease to rejoice that I was born on the limitless prairies, to grow up on their expanse means to see in long stretches, to scorn boundaries, to go free all one's life. Down around Fremont one sees carefully tilled eighty-acre farms, and sleepy domesticated animals. But two hundred miles west begin the rolling plains; and how one's heart leaps up to behold them!”<sup>19</sup>

These words proved to be metaphorical because Leta did “see in long stretches,” far beyond her contemporaries; she did “scorn boundaries,” and in doing so, she did “go free.”

Leta's pioneer parents arrived in Nebraska at approximately the same time, but by very different routes. Like hundreds of thousands of other hopeful settlers, they came west to improve the quality of their lives. It is hard to imagine the enormity of the westward movement. Between 1854 and 1880, Nebraska's population swelled from 2,700 to 450,402. By 1890, that population had more than doubled again.<sup>20</sup>

Two factors were central to this exponential growth. The first was the expansion of railroad lines. “Because of the railroad, Nebraska became a territory; because of it she thrived. Under its aegis, farmers settled, towns began.”<sup>21</sup> Receiving land grants to offset the costs of construction, the railroads enticed settlers to purchase property by using aggressive advertising campaigns throughout the United States and even in Europe. One railroad brochure exclaimed:

“You have only to tickle it [the land] with a plow and it will laugh a harvest that will gladden your hearts and make joyous your homes....

The bright sky, pure water, and clear, life-inspiring atmosphere of this region give to men and animals the vitality and inspiration of youth...the paradise of invalids...anti-bilious, anti-consumptive and anti-dyspeptic. Old men and women grow young.<sup>22</sup>

Leta's pioneer parents initially migrated to Nebraska with their families because of the economic opportunities that the railroads provided. The aftermath of the Civil War left many eager to seek their fortune elsewhere. The railroad companies needed workers. Samuel and Will Danley (Leta's maternal grandfather and uncle) enlisted as rail graders between the two towns of O'Neill and Valentine, Nebraska. As merchants, the Stetter brothers knew that a burgeoning population would bring an increasing supply of customers.

A second factor contributing to western growth was the Homestead Act, enacted by Congress in 1862. It stipulated that "any person who was the head of a household, including widows and single males, is entitled to 160 acres of federal land."<sup>23</sup> The homesteader had several months to prove that the land was intended for permanent habitation by building some type of shelter. After five years of permanent residence, the land then officially belonged to the settler at a cost of \$1.25 an acre. "What a blessing this wise and human legislation will bring to many a poor, but honest and industrious family," Nebraska's Governor Alvin Saunders exclaimed. "Its benefits can never be estimated in dollars and cents. The very thought, to such people, that they can now have a tract of land that they can call their own, has a soul-inspiring effect upon them."<sup>24</sup>

"Soul-inspiring" though it might have been, actually staying on a homestead for five continuous years was often difficult. Homesteader Jane Aldrich wrote a poem in 1877 describing the unfortunate ordeal that so many newcomers experienced.

### Alone

The shades come stalking forth  
From out the canyon, rough and black,  
While from the northwest rolling clouds  
Proclaim the Storm Fiend on the track.  
I stand within my lowly sod-built walls  
watching shadows, and the lightning's flame  
And moan, Oh God, the wretchedness  
Of holding down a claim.

Alone. To hear no voice in speech  
Only the howling coyote in the glen  
To 'fright me in the lowly watching  
In my home so near his den.  
And four year more I must stay here and wait  
And in the morn think on the shades of night,  
Then when it comes again, I shivering lie  
And pray all night through for morning light.<sup>25</sup>

It is estimated that half the original filers gave up their claims before they could be given title to the land. Although the acreage was cheap, the financial and emotional costs that went with it were often simply too great. One Nebraska pioneer wrote:

"My mother-in law did a lot of cooking in the early days for the travelers in her two-roomed soddy. People always seemed so happy coming to a new country. On some wagon covers were printed these words, 'We're going to victory.' But in a few short years on their return to the east, printed on the same wagon covers were these words, 'In God we trusted, in Nebraska we busted.'<sup>26</sup>

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"So much of what Leta Hollingworth said and did in the early 1900s has had a significant mark on how we educate gifted children today. Even so, Leta's work continues to be under-funded and under-appreciated, and – most regrettably – Leta Hollingworth's voice is too often forgotten." (**A Forgotten Voice: A Biography of Leta Stetter Hollingworth** (2002) by Ann G. Klein, p. 202, Great Potential Press).



**PERSPECTIVES FROM 55 FEET UNDER THE SEA**

**By Angela Watkins**

**Teacher of Gifted Cedar Cliff High School, Pennsylvania**

Young children approach life as an adventure full of newness, vitality, and fun. When we are toddlers, we utilize all of our senses to interpret the world around us. Basically, we are active participants in life absorbing knowledge through our surroundings, through trial and error, through our successes and failures. We take risks in order to learn. Unfortunately as adults we sometimes lose this fervor, staying safe and avoiding risks instead of venturing forth into unknown worlds.

I consider myself an adventurer, for I enjoy traveling to different countries and experiencing different lifestyles. However, all of those experiences have taken place on land. Even though I am a fairly good swimmer and had ventured forth snorkeling for a day while on a cruise, I had never had the strong desire to go down to the ocean's depths as a scuba diver. All of that changed on a July afternoon when I received a phone call from a sophomore student of mine, Marissa Chmiola, informing me that she had won an essay contest for Aquarius, the world's only underwater laboratory, located off of the coast of Key Largo, Florida.

As a teacher of the gifted, I encourage my high school students to participate in various contests throughout the year. Some students who have had success in previous years will continue to enter the contests, such as scholastic writing and history day, in high school. However, some students are intimidated at the thought of a national contest and have self-doubt as to whether or not they can be successful at such a level. Nevertheless, I encourage those students to try something new and to tackle fresh projects of interest, reminding them that they have the ability to compete on a national level if they put forth the effort and take the chance.

Last year the Aquarius essay contest was a new opportunity not only for my students, but also for the entire country, for it was the first year to be offered. Students were required to write in 1000 words or less an essay detailing why they would want to spend ten days under the ocean living in Aquarius. The grand prize was an all expense paid trip for the student, the student's family, and the student's teacher to Key Largo, Florida where they would learn how to scuba dive and then dive down 55 feet to the 82 ton double-lock pressure vessel called Aquarius. After advertising this contest to over 75 students, I had one student, Marissa Chmiola, who had the interest to research information about Aquarius and then follow through with the project by entering a well-written essay for the competition. Marissa took time during her gifted independent study course to complete the assignment and take a chance that she may win the grand prize.

Regardless of whether she won or not, she and I both gained in our understanding concerning Aquarius, considering neither one of us had a prior knowledge of the facility. But our exposure to this underwater world would not stop here. Marissa and another student, Andy Steadman, from South Carolina, were awarded the grand prize of taking a trip to Key Largo Florida, including their families and teachers in the adventure. As an educator, I would have the wonderful opportunity to be included in this experience and to test my boundaries in a new learning environment, an underwater environment called Aquarius. We were being afforded the phenomenal privilege to add to our research based knowledge with experiential understanding by swimming down to Aquarius to experience the sights, sounds, and feel of life underwater in the National Marine Sanctuary. Not only would we learn how to scuba dive, but we would also then have the honor of diving down to Aquarius to take a tour of the facility and meet with astronauts from NASA who were there on a training mission.

But before we could dive down, we needed to become competent divers. We had a few weeks to prepare for this journey before flying down to Florida. In order to dive down to Aquarius, we needed to become PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) scuba certified, and in order to become PADI scuba certified, we needed to read a 250 page book, complete quizzes, and watch videos so that we would be prepared for the training of confined water dives and open water dives prior to our final excursion down to Aquarius. We completed the assignments independently knowing that we would directly apply the information learned. During the preparation period there were feelings of excitement and apprehension. On the one hand, reading about the possibilities of problems that one may encounter underwater caused a bit of anxiety. On the other hand, when one is prepared to tackle the problems with proven solutions, one can feel more assured and confident. Needless to say, mixed emotions abounded.

Once we arrived in Florida for training, our instructor, Captain D. Scott Fowler, from Amy's Amoray Dive Resort, quizzed us on the book material and modeled proper dive techniques. On the first day of preparation, we answered written and oral questions, observed the demonstrations, and finally completed skills in the pool. This was an unknown area for Marissa, her father, and me. Consequently, we were excited and a bit nervous at first. Plus, we only had two and a half days to become certified, so the pressure of the ticking clock existed. Yet the atmosphere at the dive resort was one of comfort. We knew that we were with a competent instructor who would lead us in the right direction.

Experiencing this arena of learning as a student made me parallel the PADI instructional program with the programs of study in our school systems. As a student, I have always been appreciative of the instructor who explains where we are going and why we are headed in that direction, detailing exactly what will be expected of student performance. The PADI program of study for scuba certification was very clear with expectations and drills, which were mapped out in detail. There was never a question of what would be expected of us. Similarly, in the teaching arena, we as instructors should continue to communicate with our students the expectations we have for them. Specifically, as teachers of the gifted, we must continue to expect that students work to their highest potential. We must continue to ensure challenges and enrichment occur within the curriculum. Furthermore, we must provide a comfortable learning environment where students are engaged and willing to extend themselves even in areas that might seem risky at first. Most importantly, we must provide a comfortable learning environment, which will mobilize students to step out of their created comfort zones. When equipped students venture forth into unknown areas, real learning begins to take place. As a student preparing for the adventure of scuba diving, I was feeling tested in stepping out of my comfort zone.

During the PADI instruction, the learning process took place incrementally through independent work with our book reading and then a review and practice of skills with the instructor in the confined area of the pool until we moved to the larger area of open water dives in the ocean. This again is how we as educators provide instruction for our students. For example, we expect that they become responsible learners completing independent homework and preparation outside of the school time. In addition, we expect that they then apply that learning in the smaller microcosm of the classroom. Graduation follows when students apply their skills in the large open waters of the world.

As I prepared for our first test dive in the open water of the ocean, I knew that I had completed all of the necessary preliminary components and was capable of success. Nevertheless, the adrenaline pumped and self-doubt surfaced as I stood on the edge of the boat, the last one to jump into the eighty-six degree choppy waters. Interestingly, the conscious mind tells the body to react one way, yet the impulses surging through the body do not cooperate, resulting in unexpected reactions. I knew that a key to a successful dive required remaining calm and taking slow breaths. However, as I hit the water and took hold of the guide rope, my body thrashed with the waves. My mind



screamed orders to calm down, but my body would not obey. My reaction surprised me; I began gasping for breath and hyperventilating. I looked into the water to witness my student and her father successfully descending slowly down the rope on their way with the instructor to the sand patch below. However, I could not force my body to move in their direction. I was frozen; the 21 feet distance to the bottom seemed as though it were three miles. Consequently, I held tight to the rope and looked in the opposite direction, back to the boat, where I wanted to be. My hyperventilating continued as I heard words of encouragement from the crew on the boat. "You can do it," they yelled, "It'll be all right." I didn't feel as though it would be all right. In fact, I wanted to get back on the boat but had no idea of how I would swim around to the ladder, so I remained frozen clenching the rope with both hands.

Wondering where I was, my instructor swam to the surface to see what was wrong. With words of encouragement he told me that it would be O.K. and that the water was calmer below. This did not convince me. Not until he offered me his hand, did I respond. He said that he would take my hand and lead me down the rope to the sand patch below. If I wanted to return to the surface, he would instantly return with me. I hesitantly agreed and put my trust in him, taking his hand while taking the next step in overcoming the obstacle of my fear.

How many times do our students need for us to give them words of encouragement and a gentle push to assure them that they are capable of tasks that they themselves may doubt? I had completed the skills and the preparation for the dive; I just needed a patient guide to help me make it to the next level. This approach of calm words and the literal lending of a hand was what I needed. Scott showed that he had confidence in my abilities and that I could achieve what I myself did not think I could. With his help I was able to witness and experience first-hand the beautiful creatures that inhabit Sand Island.

PADI scuba certification requires participants to complete drills during four open water dives. With the first dive complete, Marissa, her father, and I advanced to the next dive to Hour Glass Cave on French Reef. This experience surpassed the first. This time I was the first one off of the boat; knowing what to expect with the dive helped tremendously. For example, the 31-foot depth seemed minor compared to the initial shock of the first dive looking to the sand below at 21 feet. Even though I still felt like the fish were looking at me saying, "What are you doing here? You don't belong here," I was able to enjoy my surroundings more. We saw beautifully colored fish in purples and blues including angelfish. Swimming around the reefs and plant life was almost surreal. Nevertheless, we had tasks to perform and demonstrate, including buoyancy control, mask clearing, using alternate air sources, and regulator recovery and clearing.

After the first two dives, I shared my viewpoints with Scott concerning how I didn't feel as though I belonged down in the ocean because it seemed so unnatural at first. He gave me a bit of advice on how to view our time in the ocean. He said that we should view ourselves as guests in the underwater world. They have invited us to visit, and as long as we humans are respectful in their habitat and don't remove things or antagonize them, everything will be fine. For instance, he shared, if we would go to a friend's house, we wouldn't start taking their belongings, rearranging their furniture, or begin poking and prodding them. I felt that the analogy was very appropriate. It changed my perspective, and made me look at the situation differently. Having a different point of view made me see myself as a welcomed guest, and I felt happy to be included in the experience. Once again, this is what good instructors will do; we will state information many different ways using various strategies in order to help our students understand. Hopefully, we will be able to change their perspectives that may block learning to ones that will enhance their understanding.

The next day consisted of two more open water dives, one to the Wreck of the Benwood and the other to French Reef. The Wreck of the Benwood is a World War II shipwreck that occurred from a collision when two ships from the United States were moving at night without their running lights. The dive was breathtaking. Barracudas swam around us, and we even watched a nurse shark swim by in the distance. During these two dives we performed a controlled emergency ascent, a tired diver tow, and underwater compass navigation.

Challenges continued to surface for me, including seasickness during the second dive. Once again, I began to have my doubts as to whether I would be able to dive down to Aquarius. But I had completed my tasks with the written tests and the physical drills. By eight o'clock in the evening on July 21, 2002, Marissa, her father, Joe Chmiola, and I had become PADI certified divers. The dive to Aquarius was scheduled for 8:00 the next morning. After everything I had accomplished, I had to follow through to completion; I had to visit the magnificent scientific habitat of Aquarius to see the structure and visit with the NASA astronauts. I wanted to experience first-hand what I had discovered through readings.

Initially, I had learned about Aquarius by looking at the web site and had discovered that Aquarius is located three and a half miles off of the coast of Key Largo on a sand patch 63 feet deep. The University of North Carolina at Wilmington operates and administers the program. NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, funds Aquarius, which is a research facility and a home to scientists, who are also known as aquanauts. These scientists come from all over the world to research coral and fish, to study the effects of pollution, and to train for future missions. For example, NASA utilizes Aquarius to train astronauts because the living conditions are similar to that of being in space: confined quarters, the inability to come home easily, and the challenging workloads parallel life in space. Scientists complete missions living and working in Aquarius for nine or ten days at a time. Based on the proposals they submit, they may or may not be accepted to conduct research at Aquarius. Typically, Aquarius hosts approximately ten missions a year.

The facility is attached to a baseplate, which positions the habitat 13 feet off of the bottom of the ocean. The laboratory is 43 x 20 x 16.5 feet containing two chambers of air-conditioned living and working space (Potts). In Aquarius you will find some of the same amenities that you would expect at home including six bunks, a shower and toilet, a microwave, a refrigerator, hot water, and a trash compactor. Wireless telemetry links the telephone and computers back to the shore base mission control “watch desk” in Key Largo.

The habitat of Aquarius is a significant engineering feat and a major contributor to science. It was recently featured on **The Learning Channel** on the show *Ultimate Ten* as number six out of the ten top engineering feats in the world. Aquarius is a significant engineering feat because it enables scientists to live and work underwater for many days at a time. Before Aquarius, scientists had to use surface based diving technology. In other words, scientists would dive from the surface, work for a limited amount of time under the water, and then resurface (Potts). To put in perspective, a ten-day Aquarius mission would take more than 60 days if conducted using surface based technology (Potts).

Scientists using the surface based diving could not stay for extended periods of time under the water due to the risk of suffering from a condition called “decompression sickness” or “the bends.” This condition results when pressure changes in the body and nitrogen cannot escape quickly enough, resulting in the formation of bubbles in the joints which then leads to pain and in extreme cases death (Richardson). According to Steven Miller in *How an Underwater Habitat Benefits Marine Science*, “This buildup of gases typically restricts diving scientists who work deeper than about 20 meters to approximately one hour a day at depth, which seriously limits their experimental and observational capabilities.” In the past, marine scientists used other devices such as robots and manned submersibles to compensate for the limitations. In contrast, living and working in Aquarius enables scientists to work up to nine hours at a time in the ocean collecting data and studying ocean life (Miller). According to Miller, “Many tasks – particularly those in support of scientific research – require a prolonged human presence to observe with eyes instead of cameras or to touch with hands instead of robotics arms. And nothing can substitute for the advantages of having a brain to observe, learn and improvise when the need arises.”

The aquanauts are able to live in Aquarius due to a technique called saturation diving. Steven Miller explains, “...after 24 hours at any working depth, the diver’s body becomes saturated with dissolved gas. Once the body is saturated, decompression – the period required to bring the diver gradually back to surface pressure without inflicting the bends – is the same regardless of how much time has been spent underwater.” Thus, once the scientists dive down to Aquarius and live there for 24 hours, their bodies equilibrate; a problem doesn’t arise until the divers want to resurface. When this occurs, the aquanauts spend 17 hours in Aquarius while the life support buoy, which provides air and pressure, slowly adjusts the pressure within the habitat. After the 17 hours, the aquanauts simply swim to the surface as though they just went down for a dive. As stated, most missions at Aquarius last for ten days; however, a 30 day mission is being considered for next year. According to the pamphlet, *America’s Inner Space Station, Extending the reach of science*, “Nearly 50 missions have been completed using Aquarius, and over 200 scientists have participated in the program, representing over 90 organizations including universities from across the U.S. and several foreign countries.”

Our visit to Aquarius would not be for an extended period of time. Because we would be diving and surfacing fairly quickly, our stay at Aquarius would consist of a 30 minute tour. This timing would prevent any potential danger of decompression sickness. The day had arrived and we geared up to take the dive to Aquarius. Apprehension still remained; however, the seasickness medication had taken care of any other symptoms of queasiness. Marissa remained confident and calm, as she had during the entire training time. Her father and I continued to give each other words of encouragement. Any doubts that I had previously, diminished when we met the crew who would dive with us to Aquarius. Their professionalism, light hearted nature and humor were exactly what I needed. I felt prepared and at ease with the four trained professionals accompanying us, which included Steven Miller, Ph.D., Center Director for NOAA, who would be videotaping our dive.

The dive went smoothly. Not only were we able to climb into Aquarius, take a tour, and meet with the NASA astronauts and University of North Carolina at Wilmington crew; but also we had the opportunity to swim around the habitat and witness the creatures that call the exterior of Aquarius home. Initially, we descended 55 feet and then swam into entry area, the wet porch. Once there, Marissa, Joe, and I popped up and were able to stand with water meeting our waists. We took off our gear and breathed freely without our regulators. Our voices were a bit higher in range because our vocal cords were compressed with the added pressure, and when asked if we could whistle, we tried but could not – another physical change because of the added pressure. We were already experiencing differences and had been there only a few minutes.

We were greeted by the Aquanaut Team which included Jeff Williams (Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army), NASA Astronaut and NEEMO 2 Crew Commander; Gregory Chamitoff (Ph.D.), NASA Astronaut (Mission Specialist Candidate); John Olivas, Ph.D., P.E. Crew Mission Specialist; Jonathan Dory of SPACEHAB, Inc.; Byron Croker of the National Undersea Research Center, UNCW; and Michael Smith of the National Undersea Research Center, UNCW. The crew welcomed us enthusiastically with their video camera rolling to document our experience. We climbed the steps to the “entry lock” and took a quick shower to wash as much salt water off as possible. After drying off, we walked into the “main lock,” which includes berths for the six-person crew, computer workstations, two large view ports, and life

support controls. We had a seat at the table and ate some vacuumed packed candy and then moved on to see the computers and equipment which aided them in their research and communication with the surface crew.

Even though we were isolated within the confines of Aquarius, communication devices aided in relaying images and messages to the outside world. For example, cameras recorded our movements, which were posted in real time on the Aquarius web page. In addition, we had the opportunity to make a telephone call to our relatives who were watching the event at the watch desk in Key Largo. Earlier in the week the crew had made a call to the international space station. In essence, they had made an “inner space” phone call to “outer space.”

After our tour of the interior of Aquarius, we had the opportunity to swim around the exterior. The dive was relaxing because we could enjoy our surroundings without the pressure of performing the drills previously required for PADI certification. We could now relax knowing that we were prepared. As we swam we saw a stingray and a large one hundred pound grouper. We also saw a frogfish and smallmouth grunts. It was amazing to swim and think that more is known about the surface of the moon than the bottoms of our oceans, and that in ten minutes at a coral reef, we can see more different species than in ten hours in the most unspoiled wilderness above water. In the area of underwater research, much remains to be learned.

The culmination of our adventure occurred the next evening after the Aquanauts had resurfaced from their mission when we were invited to attend a celebratory dinner. Marissa, her father, and I received honorary Aquanaut certificates and spoke with the Aquarius team. As I spoke with the astronauts from NASA, I felt refreshed and validated within my profession. One of the astronauts, John Olivas, shared with me his feelings about the teaching profession. He said that he feels teaching is one of the most difficult yet rewarding professions and that he has the utmost respect and admiration for our occupation. It is wonderful that the Aquarius team agrees with this sentiment in awarding a trip for not only the student, but also the teacher.

After accomplishing this dive with my student and her father, I discovered that I was capable of overcoming some fears in order to expand my knowledge. I had the great privilege of experiencing this underwater world in a very tactile manner, and to travel where many have not had the opportunity to go. I experienced this exciting world because a student was willing to conduct the research necessary and commit to writing the essay and take the chance in entering.

Overall, the journey confirmed some basic principles. We must not lose our thirst and enthusiasm for adventure in taking steps, which may result in experiencing successes or set backs, similar to the ones we ventured forth to undertake and achieve as youngsters. This is how we learn; we test the waters, take a few steps, fall down, and get back up again. It may sound trite, but it still rings true. For some, a natural instinct exists to venture forth and learn about the unknown: unknown territories and unknown ideas, pursuing interests and asking questions. However, others may become hesitant, wanting to remain in a created comfort zone. If I had remained hesitant by staying in my previous comfort zone, I would not have challenged myself, nor would I have enriched my life from the experience. As educators we must continue to offer opportunities for our students to expand their horizons in a manner that enables them to feel prepared and confident in stepping out of the comfort zone, to be willing to meet challenges and willingly accept the reasonable risks that may accompany learning. Most importantly, we must not forget ourselves in this process. As educators and parents we must model and nurture this adventurous spirit in ourselves, in our students, and in our children.

For more information on current Aquarius contests go to: [www.uncwil.edu/nurc/aquarius](http://www.uncwil.edu/nurc/aquarius). See Marissa Chmiola’s winning essay at:

<<http://www.uncw.edu/aquarius/education/contest/2002/winners.html>>

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## **BECOMING AN INTENTIONALLY INVITING TEACHER OF GIFTED STUDENTS**

**By William Watson Purkey**

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Successful teachers of gifted students have one central standard: *the welfare of students*. Everything these teachers do, and every way they do it, is measured by this standard. One way to determine the degree to which this standard is met is provided by “Invitational Theory” (Purkey & Novak, 1996; Novak & Purkey, 2002; Purkey & Siegel, 2003).

Invitational Theory is a theory of practice that addresses the total educational environment, including people, places, policies, and programs. It is a process for creating and communicating caring and appropriate messages intended to summon forth the realization of human potential as well as for identifying and changing those forces that defeat and destroy potential.

Four principles of Invitational Theory provide it with structure and direction. These are respect, trust, optimism, and intentionality. Of the four principles, intentionality is the most important in becoming an inviting teacher of gifted students. It is the element that gives any human activity purpose and direction. Respect, trust, and optimism have strength in accordance with the intentionality of the teacher. Intentionality is central to the other three principles because it represents a deliberate choice to be respectful, trusting and optimistic.

Intentionality has been defined as “the structure which gives meaning to experience” (May, 1969, p. 223). May viewed intentionality as the ability of people to link their inner conscious through with their intentions and overt behavior. By this definition, intentionality is not to be confused with intention. Intentionality is the dimension that underlies intention. It is our ability to have intentions in the first place.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) observed that consciousness is intentionally ordered information. To act with purpose, to act with an aim, is the essence of Invitational Teaching. The more intentionality teachers have, the more accurate their judgments, the most disciplined commitment they are to action, and the more decisive their behavior. Moreover, a teacher's energy, vitality, and commitment are directly linked to his or her intentionality.

The ability to create and maintain a consistently inviting stance is important in both personal and professional functioning. Intentionality moves the teacher beyond the technological proficiency or professional skill toward a quality of character based as much on who he or she is as what he or she knows.

When a teacher of gifted students is at the fully functioning level of intentionally inviting, he or she becomes a living example of the guiding principles of Invitational Theory. By serving as facilitator, barrier-buster, and visionary, the teacher become a powerful role model and mentor for his or her students.

The fully functioning level of intentionality has many names. World-class athletes call it the “zone.” Football teams call it “momentum.” Martial arts experts call it “sparkle.” Fighter pilots refer to it as “rhythm.” Young people call it the “groove.” But by whatever name this chemistry is called, it is possible to become so fluent – that an indefinable power is created – a force, tempo, and synchronicity – that the teacher's intentionally inviting actions become invisible to the untrained eye.

A recent description of intentionality has been provided by Csikszentmihalyi (1990). He coined the term “flow.” Flow is the holistic sensation that individuals experience when they are completely immersed in a high-level activity where challenge and abilities match. In a sense, the intentionally inviting teacher becomes “inspired.” He or she is animated by a source within oneself that literally gives the teacher the breath of life, as the word denotes.

Practice alone cannot make an educator into an intentionally inviting teacher of gifted students. Invitational Teaching cannot be confused with methods, skills, tools, techniques, or craftsmanship. The Invitational Teacher is one who has combined all of the knowledge, skill and principles of optimism, trust, and respect into who he or she truly is as a teacher. At heart, Invitational Teaching is an expression of the inspiring personality.

To conclude, positive student experiences exist because of the intentional forces of an inviting environment. Conversely, negative experiences are the products of toxic forces of a disinvolving educational environment. To summon students to think more keenly, learn more deeply, feel more sensitively, the intentionally inviting teacher creates a total educational environment deliberately designed to be a beneficial force in the lives of gifted students.

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**A Review of “Passion’s Discipline: The History of the Sonnet in the British Isles and America” – The New York Public Library (2003) By Michael E. Walters Center for the Study of the Humanities in the Schools**

This summer The New York Public Library had an exhibit that was an intellectual and emotional banquet. It was a cavalcade of manuscripts and books in the literary format known as the sonnet. The range of writers was from Dante to contemporary poets. Gifted students could acquire a taste for literature that would remain for a lifetime by viewing and studying the items in this exhibit.

At the beginning, there was an introduction to the roots of the sonnet. This literary form was started by Italian and French poets during the Middle Ages. The word “sonnet” is derived from the Italian word sonnetto which means little song. The sonnets by Dante (1265-1321) and Francesco Petrarca (1304-74) were platonic hymns to the ability of beauty and love to inspire beatific vision. These early sonnets were originally inspired by the *Song of Songs* in the Old Testament and Arab poets such as Ibn Arabi. The French troubadours wrote poetry related to the cult of unrequited love for the courtly lady. The British writer and poet, Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400) used the sonnet format for the Canterbury Tales. Gifted student would appreciate these diverse literary and cultural developments that gave the English language one of its main devices for self-expression.

By displaying the history of gifted individuals who expressed themselves through the sonnet, this exhibit was a once-in-a-lifetime treat. When you read the works of these individuals, there is no denying a realm known as genius. Shakespeare’s (1564-1616) sonnets not only showed his genius in the uses of language, but also how his artistry had intellectual and emotional depths. His sonnets possess a myriad of verbal and visual connotations. One can easily spend a lifetime examining the beauty and meaning of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

Some of the other great literary geniuses I encountered were John Donne (1572-1631), the British Romantics such as Wordsworth (1770-1850), Shelley (1792-1822) and Keats (1795-1821), and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-82) and Edgar Allan Poe (1809-49). Some of the modern poets were Siegfried Sasson (1886-1967), Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918), James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938), Claude McKay (1889-1948), Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950), and Robert Frost (1874-1963).

The exhibit is part of the Berg Collection in The New York Public Library. This collection of British and American manuscripts was the result of the work of a gifted individual who was a medical doctor, Dr. Albert A. Berg. It is an excellent demonstration of the link between sensibility and giftedness. j j j j j j j j