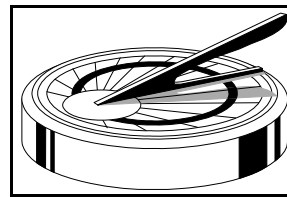


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How did an individual from an impoverished environment become a great leader of the United States and a revered defender of freedom and democracy? Abraham Lincoln received no formal education; yet he became a lifelong self-learner. Please read **Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography** (2002, Vintage) by William Lee Miller, a study of his intellectual, ethical and political development. The story of his early life is particularly enlightening for teachers who are searching for information about educating young gifted children.

In a recent interview with Michael Shaughnessy, Senior Columnist of [EdNews.org](http://EdNews.org), I discussed some of the factors that educators of the gifted should carefully examine in these difficult times. Here are some excerpts from this interview: ● First, the economy is clearly having a devastating effect on formal gifted programming in the public schools. It appears that it will take many years to recover from these economic problems, so I'm not very optimistic about the future funding situation in gifted education. The perennial American values of innovation, hard work and responsibility for giving each child the best possible chance in life should take hold in each gifted classroom and with each gifted child. Teachers, parents, professors, mentors, community leaders and all others concerned with the gifted need to pitch-in and work harder for these children. ● Second, we should examine whether we have failed to educate gifted students to be ethical human beings. So many of the individuals involved in the current economic disaster have attended the best private schools, and Ivy League and other outstanding universities. The gifted field needs to address what educators must do to help their students become good, caring citizens and ethical-moral individuals. ● Third, I am not happy with how gifted programs are dealing with humanities education. I have

argued in previous interviews that the current "tricky-dog" method for accessing and "educating" all students has produced an ongoing educational disaster. Teachers cannot educate their students properly and students cannot learn anything of lasting value in this centralized, state-run system. This is not education as practiced in Western culture for over 3,000 years, and it certainly does not favor high quality education for gifted students. ● Fourth, the issue of identifying and educating minority children needs continued emphasis. There are thousands of children in ghetto schools and poor rural areas that need to be properly assessed and to receive a challenging education for developing their highest abilities and talents.

The article by Robert E. Myers addresses the important problem of teaching reading in a creative and challenging manner. Dr. Myers has been working in the creativity field for many years, and he began his career under E. Paul Torrance's guidance and inspiration. Joan Smutny's second article on nurturing and educating gifted girls contains many resources for achieving these goals. Her latest book (with S. E. von Fremd), **Igniting Creativity in Gifted Learners, K-6: Strategies for Every Teacher** (2009, Corwin Press), has excellent recommended practices for educating the gifted. Hanna David has written a critique of Ziegler and Stoeger's overview (2007) of giftedness in Germany. She is particularly critical of their discussion of the treatment of German Jewish Nobel Prize winners and scientists during the Nazi regime. I welcome Hanna to the **GEQ** National Advisory Panel. Michael Walters' wrap-up essay discusses Abraham Lincoln's many gifted traits.

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

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## You, A Creative Reader

Robert E. Myers

Creative Teaching and Learning Consultant

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If you infer from the three elements in the title that I plan to emphasize both you and creativity in connection with reading, you probably will guess that: (a) I'll try to involve you personally in some way of thinking about the complex business of reading; and (b) we'll stress originality of thinking as opposed to accuracy, analysis, and evaluation. Also, I should add that I am considering reading in its broadest sense so that the term includes pre-reading experiences and "visual literacy."

There are several controversial issues regarding the involvement of the creative-thinking processes in reading and literature. At the level of learning to read, some teachers believe in an approach through which children make up their own stories, using them as well as those of their classmates for reading materials. These teachers emphasize imagery in connection with these and the other materials their students read. They also encourage their students to ask questions about the stories they read, especially questions that cannot be completely answered by the reading material. Many other teachers are frightened by this approach and say that it has no place in teaching children to read. *What position do you take? How would you defend your position?*

Paul Torrance (Torrance, 1970) had some interesting suggestions for helping students become more motivated to read and, after they begin reading, to become more imaginative readers. He recommended that:

### **Before a Reading Experience**

1. Students be confronted with ambiguities and uncertainties.
2. Anticipation and expectation be heightened.
3. The familiar be made strange and the strange be made familiar by analogy.
4. Students be encouraged to look at the same thing from several different psychological, sociological, physical, or emotional points of view.
5. Students be confronted with provocative questions requiring the learner to examine the information in different and new ways.
6. Students be required to make predictions based upon a limited amount of information.
7. Tasks be structured only enough to give students clues and direction.
8. They be encouraged to "take the next step beyond what is known."

### **During a Reading Experience**

1. There be a continued heightening of anticipation and expectation.
2. Students be encouraged to be creative and constructive rather than assume a cynical acceptance of limitations.
3. Their awareness of problems be heightened.
4. Students be encouraged to explore missing elements and possibilities systematically and deliberately.
5. Apparently irrelevant or unrelated elements be juxtaposed.
6. Mysteries and puzzles be explored and examined.
7. Ongoing predictions from limited information be made as new data are acquired.
8. Surprises be heightened and deliberately used.
9. Visualization of events, places, and characters be encouraged.

### **After a Reading Experience**

1. Ambiguities and uncertainties be played with.
2. Constructed responses be encouraged (e.g., a better way, a more beautiful effect, and so forth).
3. Digging deeper and going beyond the obvious be encouraged.
4. Elaborating some element through drawings, paintings, dramatics, imaginative stories, and the like be encouraged.
5. Students be encouraged to search for elegant solutions (that is, the solution that takes into account the largest number of variables).

6. Experimentation and testing of ideas be encouraged.
7. Future projections be encouraged.
8. Improbabilities be entertained.
9. Multiple hypotheses be encouraged.
10. Students be required to reorganize or reconceptualize information.
11. They be encouraged to synthesize diverse and apparently unrelated elements.
12. Students be encouraged to test and revise their predictions.
13. They be encouraged to transform and rearrange information and other elements.
14. Students be encouraged to “take the next step beyond what is known.”

Torrance believes that the prime motivator underlying these strategies is incompleteness. His findings – and my own – have shown that being able to complete something is sufficiently satisfying to a young reader so that he or she does not need any extrinsic rewards. The trick often comes in finding problems and questions that children of varying backgrounds and abilities can successfully complete. We have found that it is not necessary to “write down” to a less-than-average level of intelligence in order to involve all of the youngsters in a given class. If materials are developed that encourage the student to draw from his/her own experiences and it is understood that those personal experiences are as legitimate as anyone else’s, virtually every student in a given group will respond enthusiastically. The big advantage in using materials such as these is that there are no right or wrong answers. When that threat is removed, students who regularly withdraw or who rarely contribute ideas will surprise their teachers with spontaneous and often insightful reactions.

In a little study, fresh, unexpected responses from classroom also-rans often delighted three Portland, Oregon teachers who administered the exercises which encouraged creative thinking. Here is an example of one of the exercises that requires a student to reflect upon some earlier childhood experiences and come up with honest responses. In this exercise, “Sue Swings,” the student is simply asked to recall a time when he or she was able to perform a skill when previously it seemed impossible to do it. The student is asked: “Why didn’t Sue want to use the swing at first?” Whether brilliant or slow, every student has had the experience of fearing failure or embarrassment. We have found that students respond openly to this question.

Then the student is asked to guess why Sue decided to get on the swing several months after her frightening initial experience with a swing. My oldest child, Ted, had a number of frustrating experiences trying to learn to ride a bicycle. Over a period of several months, he and I struggled to help him acquire the skills necessary to balance, pedal, and steer unaided by a puffing dad. On one memorable occasion he ended up among the rose bushes on his way down from the top level of a two-level backyard. Ted stopped trying to ride his bike. Then one morning without any forewarning – at least four months after those painful skirmishes with the bike – he got up and casually rode the two-wheeler all over the neighborhood. We asked him how he had acquired his skills so suddenly, and he replied that he had dreamed he had ridden his bike the night before and so he just got up and made the dream come true.

The last two questions put to the student in this exercise are open-ended, as are all of the ones preceding them: “Have you ever had trouble learning to do something? What was it?” It is obvious that the so-called “slow learner” can respond as readily – or more readily – to this question as students who are graded more highly by their teachers and by the test makers. Even so, “average” students and “bright” students certainly can respond to this probe in revealing and provocative ways. The experience of anticipating failure, experiencing it and then overcoming it is common to all. The greatest literature – for adults and for juveniles – is successful because it calls up emotions that are universal.

There was another exercise called “Birds” that the students in the Portland classes seemed to enjoy. “Birds” appeals to the whimsical in a student. Again, the questions do not threaten students. They are asked to think of each of the birds depicted as personalities: “Do you think it is a friendly bird?” “What name would fit this bird?” “Which of the three birds do you like best?” Because the artist has provided the student with three rather ridiculous creatures, this exercise bears very little resemblance to more threatening kinds of tasks; and consequently the student feels freer to respond and is more likely to think more honestly.

Reading can be introduced in a number of ways, of course. A favorite device of teachers is to show a group of students the cover of a trade book before it is read aloud to them, asking the students to speculate about the characters, setting, and plot as a result of what they can see in the cover illustration. Similarly, students are often asked to interpret the action in a color illustration or photograph in writing. Their stories, when completed in a readable form, are shared; and this technique, according to some experts is one of the most powerful in encouraging students to read for pure enjoyment. Incidentally, illustrations can inhibit as well as facilitate the creative energies of students. Some technically superior drawings excite the imagination, but they say too much. Drawings like the following ones in figures 1 and 2, which are really incomplete, can inspire original thinking.

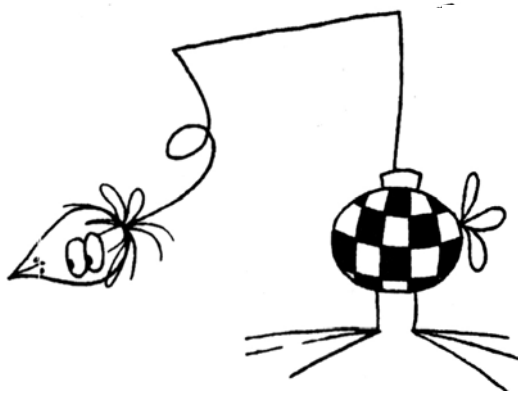


Figure 1

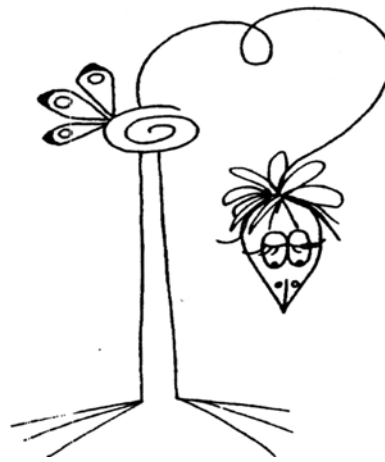


Figure 2

Incidentally, the experimental classes who engaged in the creative thinking activities gained significantly more on the *Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking* than matched control classes, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean Gains from Pretests to Posttests on the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking

Group	VFLU	VFLEX	VO	FFLU	FFLEX	FO	FE
Experimental (N = 68)	14.54	5.90	20.42	7.97	4.24	9.57	1.60
Control (N = 66)	-1.21	-0.06	-1.86	5.23	3.32	8.24	-23.39

VFLU = Verbal Fluency  
 VFLEX = Verbal Flexibility  
 VO = Verbal Originality

FFLU = Figural Fluency  
 FFLEX = Figural Flexibility  
 FO = Figural Originality  
 FE = Figural Elaboration

When I began my teaching career many years ago, I recall very well the battle that was being waged publicly over why Johnny couldn't read. At that time the sides were designated as the "look-say" approach and the "phonics" approach. Matters are more complicated in the reading field these days, and I doubt it would be accurate to say the battle lines are drawn up with just one group of advocates on either side. Nevertheless, problems of teaching reading are still the most serious in the instructional program of any elementary teacher. In all likelihood, they will remain so in our time and also in our great-grandchildren's time.

Consider, for example, the rather commonplace problems of Mr. Mellowing. Of the three seventh-grade teachers in his middle school who taught English literature, Mr. Mellowing was considered the most erratic and disorganized. He was always trying out new ideas—invariably his own ideas—and sometimes they were flops. On the other hand, none of the seventh-grade teachers in the school was so successful in exciting students.

Youngsters in Mr. Mellowing's classes frequently were enthusiastic about subjects that seemed to have little to do with English literature. His students were concerned not only with studying the stories, poems, and essays of literary greats of the past; they were greatly interested in all kinds of writing, including their own. Sometimes a student became interested as a result of browsing in the

wide selections of books, magazines, and newspapers available in Mr. Mellowing's class in a subject which was considered not only beyond the scope of the course, but also as improper subject matter for a seventh-grader. (Among these subjects investigated were the role of the United States in maintaining dictatorships in the Caribbean and in Latin America, misconduct in the Senate, illegitimacy among teenagers, and exploitation of American Indians.) The criticisms of others, however, had little apparent effect upon Mr. Mellowing's teaching practices. He continued to encourage students to read broadly and to try to understand the problems and issues they found in their reading.

Among the assignments and projects contrived by Mr. Mellowing during the two years he managed to remain in the junior high school were these:

### **Shorter Assignments in Fiction**

- Read a story from the point of view of the author; then retitile it.
- Read a myth or fable; then rewrite it, giving it a modern setting.
- Reread the story imagining that you are one of the characters reviewing the action on his deathbed. Write down what you might say to someone by your side.
- Write a few paragraphs about the merits and demerits of the story from the point of view of your parent.

### **Poetry**

- Read a poem, imagining that you are a composer of music and that you will write a musical score to accompany a reading of the poem. Describe the kinds of music you would want as background for the various parts of the poem.
- Read another poem by the same author and compare the two poems with regard to vocabulary and rhyme scheme. Report your observations and comment upon the author's diction and rhyming.
- Reread the poem; then write a parody of it.

### **Biography**

- Reread a biography, looking for critical events in the life of the subject. Explain why they were critical.
- Read a biography about somebody from the past; then compare the subject to a modern-day figure, noting marked similarities and differences.

### **Essays**

If an appropriate essay can be found in an inexpensive paperback edition, "read with a pencil." Carry on a conversation or a debate with the author by writing on the printed pages (making notes in the margins, challenging the author with questions and statements at the top and the bottom of the page).

### **Miscellaneous**

- Read a story; then dramatize a scene which is well liked or important.
- Revise the ending of the story and present the new version in written or dramatic form.
- Sketch or paint individuals or scenes from the story.
- Construct a model of a structure or of a city featured in the story.
- Make a clay model of one or more of the characters in the story (or of an animal in the story).
- Draw a map of the area in which the action of the story takes place. Use commercial maps to help you if the story is laid in a real-life place; use your imagination as well as commercial maps to help you if the locale is fictional.
- Create a comic strip which is based on the characters or situations in the story.
- Design a poster or newspaper advertisement which (1) fits in with the story's plot or (2) might persuade someone to read the story.
- Write a jingle or song which is based on the characters of the story.
- Put on a puppet show which features characters from the story (or similar characters).
- Make a mural depicting scenes from the story.
- Guess what the author might be like solely by how he wrote the story. Then read about the author and see how close you came in your guessing.

### ***What do you think of the kinds of assignments Mr. Mellowing gave his students?***

The first step of the creative process has to do with a feeling of discomfort. Unless I am badly mistaken, this is a chronic condition of teachers, especially with regard to reading problems. One way you might get a different perspective of your problems in helping students acquire and develop reading skills is to think of yourself as a magical person. We won't imagine that the world is magic or wonderful — it will be just the same kind of world as you know it to be now. But imagine yourself to have magical powers. What would you change in order that all of your students become more efficient, insightful, and creative in their reading? Why don't you give some thought to being a wonderful, omnipotent reading teacher now by responding to the questions.

### **“You, the Magical Reading Teacher”?**

If you had magical powers, what would you do to improve your reading program?

- What materials would you make easier so that your slowest readers would read more eagerly?
- What materials would you make simpler so that your slowest readers would read more readily?
- What materials would you make more exciting so that your students would not become bored?
- What materials would you make shorter so that your students would not become discouraged or fatigued?
- What materials would you make longer so that your students would become more involved in their reading?
- What materials would you make more colorful so that your students would find them more interesting?
- What materials would you make less expensive so that all the students in your classes might have ready access to them?
- What facilities in your school would you change or acquire so that students would want to read?
- What facilities in your school would you change or acquire so that students could be more comfortable when they read?
- What would you change in yourself in order to become a better reading teacher?

*Which of the problems represented by the questions above concerns you most? Why? Are some of these questions really trivial? Would they have been more appropriate 25 years ago when we didn't have so many exciting books, magazines, pamphlets, and other reading materials available to us?*

Creative reading to me means *doing something* with what one reads. And so it is my hope that somehow something you have read or heard will inspire you to do something with what you read. At the simplest level, this might mean that you take an article, handout, diagram, illustration, or book and read it with imagination. Or it might mean that you add your own ideas to those of an author. At a greater level of involvement, it might be that you will transform or rearrange ideas that you read into terms that will help you solve your instructional problems. If we are both lucky, it may be that you will “take off” on some idea, going a good ways beyond what you have read, and come up with some original solutions to the problems you face in helping students become more effective thinkers and better persons through their ability to read.

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## Guiding Gifted Girls to the “Different Drummer”

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Without intervention from the adults in their lives, gifted girls settle for a smaller life than the one their gifts call them to (Smutny, 2008). The “different drummer” within themselves—the beat that once told them what they loved and wanted to be—becomes barely audible by the time they enter college. In the sections that follow, I have outlined some of the most effective strategies for helping gifted girls and young women re-claim ownership of their lives and future. I credit the many gifted girls I have taught and known, as well as their teachers, families and counselors, for this list.

There is, of course, some overlap between the three sections. Yet they stand as three distinct areas of need for gifted girls and women:

1. The need for a strong social/emotional/spiritual core able to withstand the different pressures that try to influence it adversely.
2. The need for learning experiences and curricula that nurture healthy growth and development and that foster respect for female achievement.
3. The need for experiences that extend beyond the school and home to the wider world and that provide a vision of what is possible for their future.

### I. Social/Emotional

- Notice your own attitude and behavior and consider how they affect the gifted girls in your life. If you are a woman, are you: sensitive to the opinions of others? Intimidated by discouraging feedback? Diminished by assertive or dominant personalities? Do you minimize your talents, make excuses for your accomplishments? If you are a man, do you: encourage girls and women in the same way that you do boys and men? Make assumptions about suitable activity, interests, or goals for girls? Question the validity of girls’ interests, ideas, convictions?
- Observe how you treat girls and boys in the classroom (or in the home). Do you question girls as much as boys and at the same conceptual level? Do you respond to their questions in the same depth or detail as the boys’ questions? Do you encourage girls to assume leadership in group projects? To set up experiments? To initiate problem-solving in new or unusual ways? Do you actively discourage sex-role stereotyping for boys and girls? Do you monitor gender bias in your students/kids and discuss it with them when the need arises? Do you insist upon fairness in discussions or debates (give equal air time, encourage respect and civility)?
- Be alert to the internal saboteurs of gifted girls: self-criticism, censure, premature judgment. Share stories from your own struggles and achievements in life. A gifted child who doubts her own worth is often relieved by the discovery that her teachers or parents have stumbled, fretted and scrambled their way to achieving their goals. Teach your students (or children) to make friends with mistakes. Point out your own and show how you learned from them.
- Applaud originality, risk-taking, boldness wherever and whenever expressed. Show admiration for those times and situations where gifted girls have been true to their own ideals and interests. Trying a new approach to water color painting, even if it bombs, deserves attention. Sticking up for an unpopular kid or saying something to a friend who isn’t taking proper care of an animal are the seeds of bravery to be noted and affirmed whenever witnessed.
- Provide feedback in a way that targets the emotional needs of gifted girls. Focus on the strengths of their work first; then identify the problems. Affirming their ideas by voicing specific aspects that work well helps them to feel they are on the right track. At the same time, they need to be more tolerant of mistakes, less driven toward perfectionism. Adults can help by maintaining a healthy balance between affirmative support and practical guidance. “Gifted girls will see right through you if you gloss over the flaws,” a high school writing teacher once told me. “I usually tell them up front the specific things I love about their work, get them to do the same and then we use those positives as guides for addressing the problems. This helps because they start to see that the strengths are the key to making improvements and this kind of re-energizes them.”
- Expose gifted girls to biographies, autobiographies, documentaries, films about girls and women as inspiration and hope. The lives and works of successful women are the trails for gifted girls to follow and envision new possibilities for their own future. “You don’t realize how oriented our curriculum still is toward the white male perspective,” a middle school teacher once wrote me, “until you consciously begin seeking out *other* histories, *other* literatures, *other* inventions in math, science, industry and medicine, *other* arts works and then the scales fall from your eyes and you see that as the teacher, you’re the one who has to

redress the imbalance—the dangerous imbalance, in my opinion, because it would tell girls and minorities that they’ve done nothing but sit on the sidelines all this time.” Parents also have a vital role to play in redressing this imbalance.

## II. Instruction/Curriculum

- Minimize competition. A number of gifted girls retreat into mediocrity in competitive settings. Strategies such as learning groups, hands-on activities, independent projects, role-playing, and so on, help to reduce competition and minimize the conflict gifted girls feel between their talent and their need to belong. Reducing the competitive edge has also proven helpful to girls from cultures that don’t value the emphasis on individual achievement and success that characterizes much of American society. A girl in an fourth grade class once commented to me that her gift for writing was a “blessing for all my family” and it was clear to me that her sense of her own ability was tied to what it gave to her community.
- Arrange for gifted girls to work together. Gifted girls thrive in small groups or pairs where they can network with other girls who have similar abilities and interests (Research for Action 1996, p. 82). The very process of collaboration helps to foster a sense of belonging and can change the whole perspective they have about themselves. On the other hand, isolation tends to feed into a girl’s suspicion that she’s an oddity and makes her more susceptible to adverse social pressures.
- Use compacting through learning contracts to enable gifted girls to capitalize on their strengths. Compacting frees gifted girls to advance in areas where they are strong without drawing undue attention to themselves (Winebrenner 1992). This practice is ideal for girls who may feel self-conscious about their abilities and do not want to be pulled out for a separate program. Learning contracts also encourage girls to set their own pace and create their own activities and projects, thus giving them needed experience in directing their own interests.
- Use role-playing. Role-playing allows gifted girls to experiment without feeling threatened and to gain insights about themselves—what they can do, what they enjoy, what they do not want to pursue. Role-playing often takes the form of dramatic re-enactments or simulations where gifted girls can imaginatively project themselves into any character they choose. “I can be a queen for a day,” a sixth grader once said in a gifted program. “Or a tyrant, or lawyer, or politician. Who wouldn’t want that?” Because it is an imaginative process, gifted girls who might ordinarily hold back can surprise both their peers and themselves. Role playing provides both the freedom to experiment and plenty of material for serious debate as different students explore their roles in the light of historical change, social trends and/or various ethical questions.
- Integrate thinking styles—critical with creative, academic with imaginative. For gifted girls, it is important to integrate levels and types of thinking within single subjects. For example, math classes can have more applications to real world problems (global warming) or to art (cubism). Art lessons can become the medium for analyzing history which can then be related to literature and so forth. Abstracting content from context and cutting it off from other fields or disciplines cause it to lose meaning for many gifted girls and women. The participation of highly creative women in careers in the visual arts, music, math and science has been meager (Piiro, 1991). Certainly, creatively gifted girls and young women require more freedom to explore the full range of their abilities through alternative, innovative work.
- Develop leadership in all its forms. Having girls lead a debate team is not the only way for them to progress. In fact, putting them in charge of projects that they feel ill equipped to do and have no interest in can sometimes suppress the very qualities you want to elicit. On the other hand, helping gifted girls find their own voice and stand strong in the validity of that voice, whether in writing, speaking, debating, sketching, dramatizing, or inventing *is* leadership. Thinking about this practically, parents or teachers could, for example, ask themselves: Given Sandra’s love of geology or her talent in photography, how can we help create avenues where she would be comfortable sharing this with others? How could she collaborate with others like her? In what new contexts might these gifts provide her with an opportunity to communicate on a larger level?
- In class or at home, draw into the lives of gifted girls a wide range of biographies, autobiographies, poetry, web sites, magazines, and so forth that express the richness, variety and significance of female achievement in all fields. The exclusion of women from the curriculum reinforces low self-esteem (Kerr 1997). Integrate the inventions, masterpieces, compositions, designs, writings, discoveries of women in math, science, literacy, the arts and so forth. Try to include in history, science, mathematics, the arts and literature, the works of minority, bilingual, multicultural girls and women from around the world.
- If you are parents, create open time for exploration, discovery, creative endeavor. Start this when gifted girls are young. Help them avoid over-scheduling their days. Instill the value of quiet, alone time for them to think, work, create, explore. Insist upon time without electronics—cell phones, computers, televisions, radios. Electronic noise often silences intuition, stymies inspiration.
- Awaken the imagination and artistic sensibility through example and exposure to creative people and their works. Creativity and the arts provide rich, multi-media sources for exploring expressive style and personal vision. Whenever possible, explore the work of women artists, authors and sculptors (e.g., through books, museum exhibits, galleries, readings by women authors). For many gifted children, the arts have provided the only path for them to discover their own ideals and values.
- Display the images and words of pioneering women. Purchase posters and tape them to the walls at eye level for your students or daughters. Talk about them—their lives, what their words mean, how they lived, how they survived, what they became. Develop



a library of biographies and autobiographies by and about women and incorporate them into the curriculum (or in the daily life of the home) wherever possible.

### III. Worlds beyond the home and classroom

- Provide mentoring and/or counseling that open the minds of gifted girls to the different ways they can use their unique abilities and interests. Warn against set patterns and superficial obstacles. Ongoing discussion and counseling help gifted girls think more flexibly about their options. As was once explained to me by a gifted college student, “It was my parents who helped me figure out ways that I could combine my love for the entertainment world with my interest in economics, that I didn’t have to choose between the theater and the bank.” This is a large issue for many gifted girls and young women who thrive in learning situations that involve hands-on research, cross-disciplinary study, long-term mentoring and applications to real-world problems (Thom, 2001).
- Seek out avenues for gifted girls to display, produce or perform. When gifted girls participate in real projects, real plays, real art exhibits, they begin to visualize a future. As they grow into their new role, the road opens up. A girl I knew volunteered in a wildlife rehabilitation center at 15 and realized that by sharing her skills in computers and photography, she could improve the web site for the rehab center. The center so respected her work that she ended up posting her own photographs of rehabilitated animals on the web site. As an adult, she remembered this as a pivotal moment: “That was the first time I realized that once you get into a place that’s open to what you have to give, you find yourself using other parts of yourself that you didn’t think would apply. Here I was at the rehab center because I was a kid scientist, but once I got there I saw that I could also use my skills in photography and computers.”
- Locate resources beyond the school or home that provide opportunities for publishing and networking. As the sampling in the resource section shows, there are organizations that seek writing, photography and art work from children and young people. There are science and math sites on line where girls are invited to participate in studies and research. Jane Goodall’s Roots and Shoots program ([www.rootsandshoots.org](http://www.rootsandshoots.org)) can become a highly rewarding connection for enterprising gifted girls (as well as boys) who want to initiate larger school and/or community projects.
- Involve gifted girls in endeavors that benefit others. Many have a keen interest in applying their expertise to alleviate a real problem and teachers and parents can help them find appropriate venues. Examples could include: volunteering in animal or environmental organizations; reaching out to communities through art and science projects; becoming an intern at a small business or a local organization that is providing new opportunities to the community.
- Ask girls to imagine the future. If they could do anything in the world, what would it be? It’s better sometimes to ask what they would like to *do* rather than *be*; many gifted girls have a range of interests and abilities and don’t want to choose between them. Encourage daydreaming, outrageous goals. Begin this in their youngest years. Share books about different careers (see resource list). Have them paint/sculpt/sketch their dreams; have them create a book of dreams that they can continue to add to as they get older.

#### Where there is no vision....

A verse in the book of Proverbs says: “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (29: 18). Ultimately, what sustains a gifted girl’s life for the future is a vision she can hold onto—one large enough that it can evolve and expand as she searches for a place that is truly hers. Creating this vision should begin early and continue on for the rest of their years (Smutny, 2008; also Torrance, 1983). Helping gifted girls hold to this vision in whatever forms it takes is perhaps the most important help we can provide. It will empower them to address barriers to their achievement, to follow goals that are truly theirs. In the process, they become more open, less restricted. Enabling gifted girls to cope with the influences that suppress real interest and talent is the best safeguard we have for ensuring that they maintain greater control over their lives as they move toward adulthood.

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## SOURCES:

American Association of University Women  
Educational Foundation

1111 Sixteenth Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036-4873  
1-800-225-9998, Ext. 363

<http://www.aauw.org>

Suppliers of information and ideas on girls in schools. Examples:

*How Schools Shortchange Girls*

*Growing Smart: What's Working for Girls in School*

*Girls in the Middle: Working to Succeed in School*

*Girls Can! Community Coalitions Resource Manual*

*Schoolgirls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap*

*Gains in Learning, Gaps in Earning*

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[www.nps.gov/mamc](http://www.nps.gov/mamc)

Offers marvelous selection of posters, long distance learning opportunities and speakers. The web site includes sections for teachers and students.

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4223 Glencoe Ave., Suite C-105

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[www.cascadepass.com](http://www.cascadepass.com)

Excellent series on science and math careers from a woman's point of view. Examples:

*You Can Be a Woman Architect*

*You Can Be a Woman Engineer*

*You Can Be a Woman Egyptologist*

*You Can Be a Woman Marine Biologist*  
*You Can Be a Woman Oceanographer*  
*You Can Be a Woman Paleontologist*  
*You Can Be a Woman Zoologist*  
pdf files of lesson plans for teachers  
Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.  
400 First Avenue North, Suite 616  
Minneapolis, MN 55401-1730

Books on girls, as well as a range of exceptional materials (books, videos, etc.) on creative and critical thinking. Examples:

*Girls and Young Women Inventing: 20 True Stories About Inventors Plus How You Can Be One Yourself*, by Frances A. Karnes and Suzanne M. Bean.

*Girls and Young Women Leading the Way: 20 True Stories About Leadership*, by Frances A. Karnes and Suzanne M. Bean.

*Growing Good Kids: 28 Activities to Enhance Self-Awareness, Compassion, and Leadership*, by Deb Delisle and Jim Delisle.

*Building Self-Esteem Through the Museum of 25 Original Projects that Explore and Celebrate the Self*, by Linda R. Zack.

*Totally Private and Personal: Journaling Ideas for Girls and Young Women*, by Jessica Wilber.

National Council for Research on Women

11 Hanover Square

24<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, NY 10005

Phone: 212/785-7335

Fax: 212/785-7350

<http://www.ncrw.org>

Most important reports currently are:

*Balancing the Equation: Where are women and girls in science, engineering and technology?* By Mary Thom. [This publication includes a highly valuable resource list for girls interested in math and science]

*The Girls Report: What We Know & Need to Know about Growing Up Female* by Lynn Phillips

*IQ: Women and Girls in Science, Math, and Engineering*

National Women's History Project

3343 Industrial Drive, Suite #4

Santa Rosa, CXA 95403

Phone: 707/636-2889

Fax: 707/636-2909

[www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org)

A truly extraordinary web site for students, teachers and parents, containing not only materials and projects for the classroom and private use, but also continually updated news and information on new educational opportunities. A favorite of mine is information on the Women's History Performers—talented actresses who stage performances on exceptional women.

Organization for Equal Education of the Sexes

PO Box 438

Blue Hill, ME 04611

207/374-2489

Extraordinary range of multicultural posters for the classroom. Many of them include biographical information as well. Send \$2.00 for a catalog.

Smutny, J.F. (2007). *Reclaiming the lives of gifted girls and women*. Unionville, NY: Royal Fireworks Press.

Wellesley Centers for Women

The Center for Research on Women

106 Central Street

Wellesley, MA 02181-8259

Phone: 781/283-2507  
Fax: 781/283-2504  
<http://www.wellesley.edu/wcw/>

Examples of publications:

*Girls in Schools: A Bibliography of Research on Girls in U.S. Public Schools (Kindergarten Through Grade 12)*, by Susan McGee Bailey.

*Pathways for Women in the Sciences: The Wellesley Report, Part I*, by Paula Rayman and Belle Brett.

*How Schools Can Stop Shortchanging Girls (and Boys): Gender-Equity Strategies*, by Kathryn A. Wheeler.

*Raising Competent Girls: An Exploratory Study of Diversity in Girls' Views of Liking One's Self*, by Sumru Erkut and Fern Marx.

*Books for Boys and Girls Today: An Annotated Bibliography of Non-Sexist Books for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers*, by Carrie Spillane and Maureen Crowley.

### Web Sites

Girls go tech

[www.girlsgotech.org](http://www.girlsgotech.org)

Targets girls interested in technology and provides interesting activities and games.

Girls, Math & Science Partnership

[www.braincake.org](http://www.braincake.org)

Highly imaginative web site embracing girls as “architects of change.” Creates an online club for middle school girls to interact with peers on current science topics of interest to young minds.

E-Mentoring Network for Diversity in Engineering and Science

MentorNet

[www.mentornet.net](http://www.mentornet.net)

Innovative web site providing one-on-one email-based mentoring relationships with individuals in industry, government and higher education. Though primarily designed for college students, it is still worth investigating for gifted high school girls.

New Moon Magazine

[www.newmoon.org/magazine](http://www.newmoon.org/magazine)

An award-winning magazine created by and for girls aged 8 to 14. It accepts original writing, art work, science and articles about girls and young women around the world.

Girlspeak: Our voice is power/ Our art is activism

[www.youngchicagoauthors.org/girlspeak/index/htm](http://www.youngchicagoauthors.org/girlspeak/index/htm)

Started in Chicago, this pro-woman, web-based magazine targets girls and young women from 12 to 22, and accepts submissions of original work not only writing and art, but other media such as, audio recordings, photography and short films. It has an all-girl editorial board and offers internships in the editorial work of this webzine.

Teen Voices

[www.teenvoices.com](http://www.teenvoices.com)

Composed and designed for and by teen girls and young women, Teen Voices offers opportunities for female authors and artists, and has a particular interest in girl activism.

**Germans, Jews, the Nobel Prize in Science and Medicine**  
**Comment on the Ziegler & Stoeger**

**Chapter in Conceptions of Giftedness: Sociocultural Perspectives (2007)**

**Hanna David Ben Gurion University at Eilat, Israel**

I have recently come across "The Germanic View of Giftedness" by Ziegler and Stoeger (2007) where they write:

“. . . Prior to the Second World War, more than one quarter of all Nobel Prizes bestowed in the fields in physics, chemistry and medicine had been awarded to German scientists.

“Sadly, the intellectual and cultural community in Germany endured a deep nadir during the Third Reich and long after its defeat in the World War II because research in many areas was forbidden and many of the most distinguished public figures emigrated. . . .” (Ziegler & Stoeger, 2007, p. 65).

This paragraph consists of two major faults. The first is about facts; the second – the interpretation of [other] facts.

Is it indeed true that, prior to the Second World War, German scientists won more than a quarter of the Nobel prizes in physics, chemistry and medicine? The Nobel Prize is awarded to individual scientists, and thus, the only statistics that can be calculated as to the presentation rate of any sub-population among the Nobel Prize winners should not count the actual times the prize was awarded, but rather the number of scientists that have won it. If in a certain year the prize was divided among 3 recipients, each of them should be counted as "Nobel Prize Laureates."

In the years 1901-1939, 92 scientists won the Nobel Prize in physics (29), chemistry (30) and medicine (33). Only twenty of them – less than 22% – to non-Jewish Germans: 7 in physics, 9 in chemistry and 4 in medicine. During these years an additional number of 15 German scientists won the Nobel Prize in these three disciplines: 4 in physics, 4 in chemistry and 7 in medicine.<sup>1</sup> All of them were Jews. If Ziegler and Stoeger (ibid) prefer not to count the German Jews who won the Nobel Prize as "Germans," less than a fifth of the Nobel Prize winners in physics, chemistry and medicine, prior to the First World War, were "Germans." If they do count these 15 distinguished scientists, the rate of "German Prizes" would have been more than a third!

1. All of these 15 Jewish scientists were "rewarded" by being forced to stop their scientific activity in 1933. The reason was not some kind of general rule, "because scientific activity was forbidden" but because it was forbidden to Jews. Unlike most European Jews who were killed by the Nazis, almost all these 15 distinguished scientists managed to save their lives, but they certainly did not just "emigrate": they left the country to which they had brought so many honors, sometimes in the last minute, and started anew contributing to the brain reservoir of their new homeland.

"In January 1933 there were some 523,000 Jews in Germany, representing less than 1 percent of the country's total population. . . ." (GERMAN JEWISH REFUGEES, 1933-1939).<sup>2</sup> Jews were awarded 15 of the 35 Nobel Prizes, about 43%, while consisting of less than 1% of the population. This means, that Jewish eligibility for the Nobel Prize was about 50 times higher than expected according to their representation in the population. In fact, the likelihood of receiving even one "Jewish" Nobel Prize in Germany in 1901-1939 was very low, assuming Jewish scientists would have taken their "fair share" of these prizes.

2. ". . . the holocaust, which claimed more than 6 million victims [...]" (Ziegler & Stoeger, p. 68) changed the demographic picture of the Nobel Prize winners. Germany had lost in the "Nobel Prize race" both to America, the country that became the

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<sup>1</sup> The proportion of Germans versus German Jews would be even more striking had we not taken into account the 3 Nobel Prizes given to Germans in 1939, while the majority of German Jews had already left Germany, and those remaining were facing concentration camps and death rather than Nobel Prizes.

<sup>2</sup> Actually, in January 1933 Jews comprised 0.78% of the German population, while in June 1933 their rate decreased to 0.75% due to the massive emigration of German Jews starting right after the beginning of the Nazi rule in January 1933 (GERMANY: JEWISH POPULATION IN 1933, 2008).



main center of most talented refugee-Jews, and to Jews, as a religious/ethnic group – awarded as many as 118 Nobel Prizes in physics (47), chemistry (22) and medicine (49) (Feldman, 2001; Jewish Virtual Library, 2008; Symons, 2000) – far less than the meager number of 72 Germans.<sup>3</sup>

Jews have done extremely well regarding other prizes for extraordinary accomplishments. They have won 12 of the 44 Fields Medal(s) for Mathematics, 27% of all medals, while Germans won only 3 (The Jewish Contribution to World Civilization, 2008). 48% of the winners of The Frank Nelson Cole Prizes in algebra and number theory went to Jews.

“ . . . Jews have won 26 percent of The Gairdner Foundation Awards, 36 percent of the Wolf prizes in Medicine, 40 percent of the Louisa Gross Horwitz prizes, and 32 percent of the GM Cancer Research Foundation Alfred P. Sloan, Jr. prizes” (Jewish Achievement, n.d., no date available).

### **In Summa:**

A theory of giftedness should be based on facts. The history of the German contribution to the World's intellectual wealth cannot ignore the Jewish contribution to all cultural, political, artistic and scientific areas. The person who labeled Einstein's Relativity as *Jewish Physics* (Broch, 1950) had not harmed German science; he had just cited the stupidity left over from the Nazi era. Publishing twisted facts in a scientific book, and substituting words such as "expelling" and "killing" with the "nicer" word "emigrating" is not the right way for describing German Jewish Medal winners.

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<sup>3</sup> Had we counted the number from 1939 until today the numbers would have be even more striking, as about one half (35) of these prizes were given to Germans prior to the second World war.

## **Abraham Lincoln: A Potpourri of Intelligence**

**Michael E. Walters**

### **Center for the Study of the Humanities in the Schools**

“ . . . Lincoln would be good at finding the nub of the matter. He would become a thinker in particular about moral ideals as they intersect with politics.” (from **Lincoln’s Virtues: An Ethical Biography** (2002) by William Lee Miller, p. 14)

“Although volume upon volume is written to prove slavery a good thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take the good of it, by being a slave himself.” Abraham Lincoln, 1854 (from **Abraham Lincoln: Quotes, Quips, and Speeches** (2009) by Gordon Leidner, p. 71)

Educators of the gifted should study the unique traits that Abraham Lincoln expressed throughout his life. Lincoln was a master politician. However, his political skills were based not on the mere manipulation of public opinion but primarily on his gifted traits. Before he became President, there was very little in his personal resume that would enable anyone to understand the greatness of his leadership during the American Civil War. This leadership was so accomplished that it is easy for the present generation to fail to grasp the following point: It is probable that without Lincoln, the Confederacy would have prevailed by wearing down the patience and endurance of the Union. The casualty rate of the Civil War and suffering make Vietnam and Iraq look like minor tragedies. The election of 1864 appeared to be Lincoln’s last hurrah – he was not only reelected but a large amount of his support came from the soldiers.

During his developmental years, he constantly used his gifted traits for self-initiated projects, e.g., he learned English grammar skills in a few months. His other self-education projects were in mathematics and law, and he became one of the top lawyers in the Mid-West prior to his Presidency. When Lincoln served in the United States Congress (1847-49) there was evidence of his giftedness. He spent a major part of his time reading in the Library of Congress. His most memorable speech in Congress was a critique of the Mexican-American War in which he objected to its long-term impact.

Lincoln was able to function on many unique intellectual levels. He was a brilliant manager of day-to-day practical politics. Then there was the ability to express profound ideas in simple and almost biblical cadences. The words that he wrote are etched in our national psyche. For example, in the Gettysburg Address (1863), he converted the war goals of preserving the Union to expanding human freedom. Yet he did not mention the word slave once, although it is evident what he was referring to. In his Second Inaugural Address (1865), he anticipated when the war would end and stressed the importance of healing the national wounds.

There are three books that educators of the gifted should study in order to comprehend the range and depth of Lincoln’s giftedness: The first is **Lincoln’s Virtues: An Ethical Biography** by William Lee Miller (2002, Vintage Books). The second book is **Abraham Lincoln: Quotes, Quips, and Speeches** by Gordon Leidner (2009, Cumberland House). The third is **Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and The War Years** by Carl Sandburg (2002, Mariner). At the end of **The War Years**, there is an account of the speech by Bishop Matthew Simpson at Lincoln’s funeral in Springfield, Illinois. It provides insight into how the public understood the leadership of one of our greatest presidents.

“There are moments which involve in themselves eternities. There are instants which seem to contain germs which shall develop and bloom forever. Such a moment came in the tide of time to our land, when a question must be settled which affected all the earth. The contest was for human freedom, not for this republic merely, not for the Union simply, but to decide whether the people, as a people, in their entire majesty, were destined to be the government, or whether they were to be subjects to tyrants or aristocrats, or to class-rule of any kind. This is the great question for which we have been fighting, and its decision is at hand, and the result of the contest will affect the ages to come. If successful, republics will spread, in spite of monarchs, all over this earth.” (Excerpt from the Funeral Address for Abraham Lincoln delivered by Bishop Matthew Simpson in Springfield, Illinois on May 4, 1865.)

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