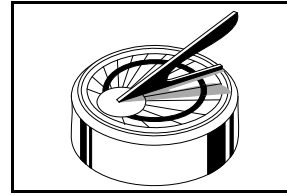


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Our Twentieth Anniversary

It is with heartfelt sympathy for parents, relatives, friends and faculty that I am making the following comments on the tragedy at Virginia Tech (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University). As a land-grant institution which serves a wide range of students, this university is particularly noted for its strong engineering, science and veterinary medicine programs. It is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of southwestern Virginia, a beautiful and unique area. The students and faculty who were murdered had exceptional talents in many different academic areas, e.g., English literature, international studies, architecture, foreign languages, and environmental, civil, computer and chemical engineering. During the days after Monday, April 16th, the students were the brightest lights that stood far above the slovenly media reports. Their deportment and rational discussions represent the fighting spirit of all Virginia Tech Hokies. They will recover from these horrendous events and reach high levels of achievement.

I recently attended the annual Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE) meeting in Pittsburgh where the presentations covered a variety of topics. The keynote speaker was Professor Sally Reis of the University of Connecticut. Her positive strength-based message concentrated on research from The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented and her interactions with teachers. First, she described follow-up research on college students who majored in various

areas of science or medicine. Many showed early interests in these fields as demonstrated by the types of independent study projects (mainly science areas) they selected in gifted programs. Reis also discussed research on underachievement which shows it can be reversed by providing stimulating enrichment opportunities emphasizing students' academic strengths. The inspirational message of this keynote address is: Teachers of the gifted can have a significant impact through using a challenging curriculum that appeals to students' interests and their self-motivation to learn independently.

Professor Donna Ford of Peabody College of Education, Vanderbilt University presents the first article in this issue. She discusses the importance of training all teachers to become skilled at identifying Black and Hispanic students who are gifted. The second article is an interview with M.K. Raina conducted by Professor Michael F. Shaughnessy of Eastern New Mexico University. In this fascinating interview, Raina discusses his long association with E. Paul Torrance, and his own extensive work on creativity in India and the United States. He was a professor in India and currently lives in Davis, California. Shaughnessy has conducted numerous interviews with educators which are available on EdNews.org. The third article by Ross Butchart is an eloquent and articulate statement of the need for gifted educators to teach the humanities. Michael Walters concludes this issue with a memorial tribute to Kurt Vonnegut.

Maurice D. Fisher, Ph.D. Publisher



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Teacher Referral as Gatekeeping: Cultural Diversity Training is One Key to Opening Gifted Education Doors

Donna Y. Ford

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In the spring 2007 issue of *Roeper Review*, five of the nine articles focused on culturally diverse gifted students (Sternberg, 2007; Milner & Ford, 2007; Shaunessy, McHatton, Hughes, Brice, & Ratliff, 2007; Chan, 2007; Pfeiffer, Petscher, & Jarosewich, 2007). In *Cultural Concepts of Giftedness*, Sternberg (2007) called for educators to be more proactive in understanding and making identification and placement decisions, placing culture at the forefront of our thinking and decisions. His article presented a compelling picture on how culture does indeed affect what is valued as gifted and/or intelligence, how gifts and talents manifest themselves differently across cultures (also see Chan, 2007, regarding leadership and emotional intelligence among Chinese students), and how our assessments and the referral process ought to be culturally sensitive. In a similar vein, Milner and Ford proposed that cultural considerations cannot be ignored or trivialized when examining the under-representation of culturally diverse students in gifted education. Sharing several cultural scenarios and models, they urged educators to assertively and proactively seek extensive training in cultural diversity in order to become more culturally competent. Underlying their call for such training is the belief or conviction that teachers, ill-prepared to be culturally competent, are not likely to be effective in the recruitment and retention of culturally diverse students in gifted education.

Shaunessy et al. (2007) focused on the experiences of bilingual Latino/a¹ students in gifted and general education. Several students in their study believed that being gifted was special, and being culturally diverse and bilingual added to that specialness. One of her students, Malena stated: “You’re already special enough [because you are bilingual], but you are extra special because you are also gifted. ... Latinos/as are not supposed to do well in school, and that’s the expectation. So if you are gifted and Latino/a, then you’ve exceeded expectations. You feel a sense of pride, because you are doing better than even Americans are doing and you aren’t even from here” (p. 177).

In other words, these Latino/a students appeared to believe, as proposed by Milner and Ford and by Sternberg, that diversity matters, and that cultural diversity cannot be ignored in our ideas, theories, and measures of giftedness, and eventual placement.

Despite pride expressed by many of the students in the study by Shaunessy et al. (2007) about being gifted and culturally and linguistically diverse, all of them had faced some form of discrimination; some mentioned discriminatory school policies, and some stated that they did not feel accepted by White

teachers and White students, both of whom made disparaging comments to them about their ethnicity (p. 179).

All of the articles carry important implications for what will be discussed in the next pages. That is, as I have argued for over a decade, educators must be proactive in making professional and personal changes to meet the needs of an ever-changing student population. That is to say, slightly more than 40% of students in our schools are Black, Latino/a, Asian, and American Indian, yet some 90% of teachers are White. If this overwhelming White teaching population lacks training in gifted education, how can they effectively refer students for gifted education screening? Likewise, if they lack training in cultural diversity, how can they effectively refer culturally diverse students for gifted education screening? In their recent study on teacher ratings, Pfeiffer et al. (2007) found that Asian and White students were rated higher by teachers than African American, Native American, and Hispanic American students. If teachers, administrators and policy makers, for example, fail to see that giftedness is a social and cultural construct (Sternberg, 2007; Milner & Ford, 2007), then how can they appreciate cultural differences? How can they not let deficit thinking (e.g., stereotypes, biases, prejudice) and/or color blindness interfere with their views of students?

In this article, I contend, as I have asserted elsewhere, that the teacher referral process contributes significantly to the under-representation of culturally diverse students in gifted education. In other words, teacher referral (and how they complete rating forms), intentionally or unintentionally, serves as a gatekeeper, closing doors to gifted education classrooms for culturally diverse students. The importance of addressing teacher referral as gatekeepers is not a trivial matter, as most states include teacher referral and/or teachers to complete checklists on students in the screening pool (Davidson Institute, 2006). In the pages that follow, I briefly review literature on teachers as referral sources for gifted students and gifted minority students. I end by proposing recommendations for addressing this barrier.

Teachers as Referral Sources: One Form of Gatekeeping

The topic of teachers as referral sources for gifted education assessment and placement falls under the larger umbrella of the teacher expectations or perceptions and subsequent student achievement. This body of work refers to the extent to which a teacher’s prior judgment of a student’s achievement corresponds to the student’s achievement on grades or some formal and objective measure, such as a standardized or performance-related instrument (Rist, 1996; Zucker & Prieto, 1977).

For more than eight decades, scholars have examined the efficacy of teacher judgment when making referrals for gifted education screening, identification and placement (e.g., Borland, 1978; Cox & Daniel, 1983; Gagné, 1994; Gear, 1976; Hoge &

¹ The terms ‘Latino/a’ and ‘Hispanic American’ are used interchangeably in this article. I use the term presented by the author of each work cited.

Coladarci, 1989; Pagnato & Birch, 1958; Terman, 1925). Not surprisingly, results have been mixed – some studies find teachers to be accurate in their referrals, others find them to be inaccurate. For example, Terman found that teachers overlooked up to 25% of students eventually identified as highly gifted on an intelligence test; however, Gagné has argued that teachers are effective and some of the previous studies have been methodologically and conceptually flawed. At least three factors seem to contribute to the differential findings: (a) different instruments used to validate teacher's judgment; (b) different populations of gifted students (e.g., gifted vs. highly gifted; male vs. female; younger vs. older students); and (c) different methodologies.

Regardless of the findings, few of these studies and literature reviews have focused on teacher referral and identification of gifted students who are culturally diverse. A body of scholarship exists which has shown that some teachers have negative stereotypes and inaccurate perceptions about the abilities of culturally diverse students and families (e.g., Boutte, 1992; Harmon, 2002; Huff, Houskamp, Watkins, Stanton, & Tavegia, 2005; Rist, 1996; Shumow, 1997). Specifically, it is possible, for reasons already noted, that teachers (the majority of whom are White) are more effective at referring and identifying giftedness among White students, but less effective at doing so with culturally diverse students. On this note, Beady and Hansell (1981) found that African American teachers held higher expectations of African American students than did White teachers.

Teacher Referral and Culturally Diverse Students

Over three decades ago, Fitz-Gibbon (1974) studied different components of identification for intellectually gifted low-income minority students in California, including tests and teacher referral. Relative to teacher referral, she concluded: "One might hazard the generalization that when teacher judgments are relied upon for placement or identification it is likely to be the child who does not relate to the teacher who gets overlooked, despite the fact that his achievements and ability are equal to or higher than those of the students recognized as bright" (pp. 61-62). When culturally diverse students were immature, taciturn, less comfortable with adults, or affable in some way, they were more likely to be overlooked by teachers.

In a study of Hispanic and White students, Plata and Masten (1998) reported that White students were significantly more likely to be referred than Hispanic students and White students were rated higher on a rating scale across four areas of giftedness – intelligence, leadership, achievement, and creativity. (Also see Pfeiffer et al., 2007). Forsbach and Pierce (1999) reported that teacher referrals of African American, Latino American and Asian American students were ineffective as an identification tool in their sample of students in 199 middle schools in New York. After formal training, however, teachers were more effective at identifying African American students only.

Two recent studies have continued this line of research on teacher referral and culturally diverse students. Elhoweris, Mutua, Alsheikh, and Holloway (2005) examined the effects of students' ethnicity on teachers' decision making using three vignettes of gifted students. Only the ethnicity of the student in the vignette changed. Findings indicated that students' ethnicity matters when teachers make referrals. Specifically, "Elementary school teachers treated identical information contained in the vignettes differently and made different recommendations despite the fact that the student information was identical in all ways except for ethnicity" (p. 29). Finally, in a study of referral sources using all elementary students in the state of Georgia, McBee (2006) reported that teacher referrals were more effective (accurate) for White and Asian students than for African American and Hispanic students. McBee concluded: "The results suggest inequalities in nomination, rather than assessment, may be the primary source of the underrepresentation of minority ... students in gifted programs" (p. 103). Further, he noted that the findings could be interpreted in several ways, one being that "... the low rate of teacher nomination could indicate racism, classism, or cultural ignorance on the part of teachers..." (p. 109).

Recommendations for Opening Doors: Teacher Training as One Key

The less we know about each other, the more we make up (D.Y. Ford).

Earlier work on the effectiveness of teacher referrals in identifying gifted students often showed teachers to be ineffective; more recent work indicates that teachers are more effective than originally reported. An important caveat must be noted. Although few studies have examined teacher referrals of culturally diverse students for gifted programs, the findings are consistent: (1) teachers frequently under-refer African American, Latino/a, and American Indian students for gifted education screening; (2) teachers' ratings of these culturally diverse students tend to be lower; and (3) teacher referrals tend to not be effective in the identification process of gifted students who are culturally diverse. Unfortunately, none of the aforementioned studies interviewed teachers for further explanations regarding their attitudes and decisions. It is unclear if low referrals and ratings of culturally diverse students were related to lack of training in gifted education, lack of training in urban education, or both. It is also unclear whether stereotypes about gifted students and/or culturally diverse students played a role.

Teacher training in the areas of gifted education *and* multicultural education seems to be a promising practice for improving the effectiveness of teachers to see giftedness in culturally diverse students (Ford & Harris, 1999). Works by James Banks, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Lisa Delpit, Jacqueline Irvine, Barbara Shade, A. Wade Boykin, Rosa Mickelson, Geneva Gay, Claude Steele, Asa Hilliard, and John Ogbu hold much promise for improving the attitudes, skills and dispositions of teachers in the area of multicultural education; works by myself, Mary Frasier, Alexinia Baldwin, Jaime Castellano, James Borland, Nicholas Colangelo, Margie Kitano, Ernesto Bernal, and Tarek Grantham are recommended in the area of

multicultural gifted education. Further, resources from the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented have focused extensively on gifted students who are culturally diverse.

Dozens of topics can be addressed when seeking to improve the culturally competence of teachers. At a minimum, teacher training about gifted students, culturally diverse students, and culturally diverse gifted students should focus on:

- Understanding the effects of stereotypes on student achievement, motivation, and sense of belonging in gifted programs and other educational settings.
- Understanding the characteristics, needs, and development of each group (social, emotional, and psychological).
- Understanding cultural diversity and its impact on learning styles, communication styles, and test performance.
- Modifying teaching styles to address the learning styles and preferences of culturally diverse students.
- Developing gifted education curricula that is also multicultural.
- Building relationships with culturally diverse families, increasing family involvement, and understanding different parenting styles.
- Understanding peer pressures and relationships, and their effects on culturally diverse students' achievement.
- Understanding underachievement among gifted students who are culturally diverse.
- Understanding multicultural assessment issues, including biases and equitable assessment principles.

The increasingly diverse population in our schools ought to compel educators to be proactive in seeking to become more culturally competent. Culturally competent educators are likelier to see gifts and talents in their students; when gifts and talents are viewed through a cultural lens, teachers are more likely to refer them for gifted education screening, identification, and placement. As several studies reviewed in this article demonstrate, teacher training can make a positive difference. I urge educators and families to consider fully how students' lives are diminished when they are denied opportunities to be identified and placed in gifted education classes and programs.

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An Interview with M.K. Raina: About Creativity

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(1) I understand that you received a most prestigious award in 2006. Could you tell us about it?

The Georgia Association for Gifted Children's *E. Paul Torrance Creativity Award* recognizes outstanding achievement in areas related to the study and/or promotion of creativity. Any individual (student, parent, teacher, administrator, or community leader) who has advanced the life long work of Dr. E. Paul Torrance through scholarly work on creativity, individual creative productivity, or helping in the recognition and development of creative potential in others is eligible for this award. Nominations are submitted to a review panel, established by the Awards Committee, for screening.

The contributions of this individual should have had a significant impact over time. The sustained efforts of nominees shall have positively influenced others—either directly or through a ripple effect—and/or show promise for continued influence on the field and/or the creativity of others (e.g., students, teachers, other professionals). Preference is given to nominees whose work has had (or shows strong potential to have) a positive impact on gifted students in the state of Georgia.

The contribution(s) of this individual should have a clear relationship to one or more areas of Dr. Torrance's work. These include, but are not limited to: creative problem solving; Future Problem Solving; assessing and identifying creativity, including the use of *The Torrance Tests of Creativity*; the recognition of creative strengths in economically disadvantaged students; mentoring; developing creativity in students, especially those from undeserved populations; using the *Incubation Model of Teaching*; and other types of curriculum.

The recipient is acknowledged with an original three-dimensional award, created by a Georgia student, which represents the spirit of Dr. Torrance's work as a researcher, teacher, and mentor. Personally, I consider receiving this Award a real honor which makes me think more seriously of his "Manifesto" and the ways in which one can achieve some of those goals. It is my great honor that my name will be associated with the name of Dr. Torrance whom I have known for ages.

Receiving this Award from the Georgia Association is very dear and valuable to me since Dr. Torrance was a native Georgian.

Torrance served as an exemplar of a life which became a legend in its own way. Torrance's life was well lived and hopefully won't be forgotten soon. The *Bhagavad Gita* mentions this idea: "Whatever the best person does, exactly that do other people do; people follow the *pramanam* he sets" (III.21). People know of the example of this "best" person whose life becomes a means to others. As far as I know, he did not believe in the passivity of having, but in the creativeness of being. Detesting manipulation, he abhorred establishing his credibility-by-association in his field of work. He made tremendous voyages in discovering and nurturing creativity. He did not care for rejection, ridicule, and opposition. Remaining totally immersed in his work, he did to the very last what I call "*srijansadhna*" (a Hindi term referring to a person who is devoted to and in search of learning and knowledge about creativity). I will always remain grateful to him for the ways he used to nurture me, and many more in different lands and circumstances.

(2) What are some other awards have you received over the years?

My contributions to the discipline have received recognition in the form of several awards, including the Professor V.K.R.V. Rao Award in Psychology for 1985. This award, instituted by The Institute of Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, India, is administered by the Indian Council of Social Science Research. The award is for "those Indian Scholars who have made a significant original contribution to human knowledge and progress, applied or fundamental in the specified fields of social science and who are below the age of 45 years of the year to which the award relates." In 1992 and 2006, I was nominated for the National Association for Gifted Children's E. Paul Torrance Award. In 1996, I was awarded the First World Council Creativity Award of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. The World Council described me as "an outstanding model of creative thinking, as well as a promoter of the importance of creativity."

(3) What first got you interested in creativity?

During my graduate studies, I recall having read a book review of an outstanding, though controversial, work on creativity, entitled "*Creativity and Intelligence*" by Getzels and Jackson (1962) in the *Journal of Educational Research*. This research took me to many other important works of Terman, Cattell, Guilford, Maslow, Torrance, MacKinnon, Taylor, Bruner, Barron, McClelland, Vernon, Liam Hudson, and also the monumental Utah series on creativity. These works prompted me to examine the correlates of creativity in a different culture, distinctly different from the Western culture. In doing my studies, Torrance's monumental report on his cross-cultural research in creativity provided something like a "crystallizing experience." However, as my interest in creativity became broad based, I was exposed to a wide variety of philosophical, psychological, sociological, scientific and artistic aspects which made me realize that the concept of creativity was not new to those societies which are called indigenous and "developing" societies. At that point in time, I found a sound psychometric approach to creativity quite rewarding and devoted a great deal of my time and energy in studying how Torrance's creativity measures worked in non-Western cultures, like India. It is then that I got into the area of manifest theory of creativity, and with my father studied teacher-educator perceptions about ideal child. This and other studies along these lines by me motivated many scholars to study the perceptions about the ideal child/student in diverse cultures.

In the Indian context, my fascination with creativity was further reinforced by the scientific works of Manas Raychaudhuri in the field of musical and artistic creativity. Further, Anand Coomaraswamy and Kapila Vatsyayan's works on Indian art and aesthetics, M. N. Srinivasa's on Indian sociology, Ashis Nandy's on Srinivasa Ramanujan and Mulk Raj Anand's on giftedness in Indian society enriched my ideas about creativity. Sumitranandan Pant's literary genius, characterized by romanticism, mysticism and symbolism, made me realize what shape and form creativity can take. Indian philosophy and some indigenous sources were instrumental in crystallizing my ideas about how to develop creativity. It was during those days that I was fortunate to receive a copy of *Applied Imagination* from Alex F. Osborn, who acknowledged the inputs he had received from *Upanisadic* sources to formulate his ideas about brainstorming. That was revealing indeed. Those were the days when creativity research was resilient, fresh and alive. Not much reinventing of the wheel. It was ecstatic to work in this young, but infinitely challenging field.

(4) What have you published on creativity?

My works on creativity, talent and giftedness, as categorized into various groups, may provide some idea of what has interested me during about the last forty years of my professional life. I have not mentioned those works which are not directly related with these areas.

Assessing Creativity. I started working on creativity tests in 1964 and based on research and experiences gained from data collected from various groups, I made a strong case for their use in talent search programs. I also pleaded for widening the concept of giftedness and talent (see *Talent Search in the Third*

World, 1995, Foreword by Harry A. Passow). I initiated with the help of my doctoral students, studies on the follow up of the creatively gifted, providing evidence relative to the predictive validity of the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking. With the use of these tests, I was able to provide evidence about the creative positives of the disadvantaged. Using the Torrance tests and his perspective on creativity, I made a number of studies on cross-cultural comparisons. Teachers, school students, university students, disadvantaged boys and girls, high caste, low caste, students from different regions in India were studied.

Implicit Theory of Creativity. I attempted numerous studies on the ideal child/pupil to provide indications about implicit theories of creativity in various cultures. These studies became catalysts for many researchers around the world to plan their study on how the ideal child/pupil is perceived in different countries. These studies have also provided data to various researchers engaged in cross-cultural research for conceptualizing implicit theories of creativity. A study on cross-cultural perspectives on parents' and teachers' implicit theories of children's creativity was published in the *Creativity Research Journal* in 2002. Torrance has documented my studies in his various publications and the way they led to further exploration.

Personality, Motivation and Creativity. Most of my studies and the studies of my doctoral students have focused on creativity as related to personality and motivational factors in various groups. Besides very many personality and motivational measures, Torrance's 'Creative Motivation Scale' and Khatena's 'Something About Myself' became the basis for numerous studies to understand creative motivation in various cultures. I also developed a syllabus-bound, and syllabus-free inventory to study orientation of creative students. Cognitive styles, sex differences, openness to inner experience, life goals, achievement motivation, modes of information processing, type A and type B personality and a host of other personality variables were studied in the context of creative behavior.

Social and Cultural Change and Changes in Creative Functioning. During the mid eighties, I made cross-era comparisons to study any changes that had taken place in the fourth grade slump, sex-differences, performance on creativity tests, teacher perceptions about the ideal child after a gap of around eighteen years. Developmental trends were studied in the context of social and cultural changes. Torrance supplied the data from his studies made in sixties. This study extended Torrance's work in terms of space and time. The report based on this research took the shape of a book.

Torrance Phenomenon. In 1996, I articulated the "Torrance Phenomenon" based on some aspects of Torrance's work, with illustrative examples in support of my arguments drawn from his research, particularly relating to national, international and cross-cultural inquiries.

Reading this work, Torrance (1993) became "very ecstatic about it." "I think," wrote Torrance, "it gets at the essence of my work, and it is done very beautifully." In the Foreword to this work, Torrance documented my "excellent job of capturing the excitement of my multi-cultural studies...." Torrance hoped, "that each reader will catch some of this enthusiasm." "If creativity researchers become familiar with this body of research, they would be less concerned about what they now see

as inconsistencies. It would be all meaningful," believed Torrance.

The "Torrance Phenomenon" generated some interest among the workers in the field of creativity, making Magyari-Beck to write on this theme in the *Creativity Research Journal*. Commenting on this work, Gudmund Smith, a Swedish researcher, wrote: "It has taught me more about the man and his research than I knew before." Roberta M. Milgram (1995) from Israel wrote: "All in all, though, Torrance has made a great contribution and your monograph will help to preserve the record of his achievements." Joe Khatena (1994) did mention: "My impression of the paper is that it is scholarly, and the link you have made of Western conceptions and theory of creativity and the Hindu conception of Lord Vishvakarma as the source of universal creativity is unique. It is a fitting tribute to Torrance's genius and I am glad to see it done by you."

Cross-Cultural Differences. As a result of a comprehensive review article (*Indian Educational Review*) on cross-cultural differences that I wrote in 1974, I got deeply interested in this fascinating area. In an international conference on creativity research in Buffalo, I presented evidence to support my contention that creativity research was, by and large, ethnocentric (see Isaksen, 1993) and we need to study creativity in a broader context. I wrote on the mythical paradigm and on creative communion in different cultures for Morris Stein's *Creativity's Global Correspondents* (1998, 1999). I published on cross-cultural differences in manifest theories and studied creative functioning and talent processes across nations. In 2002, I spoke on the "garland approach to creativity" in an international conference on cultural diversity and creativity in the UK. However, in my keynote address to the World Conference on Gifted Children in 1987, I also pleaded for recognizing indigenous creativity. I was invited to write on "cross-cultural differences" for Mark Runco's (2000) *Encyclopedia of Creativity*.

Insights from Cross-Cultural Studies. By synthesizing Torrance's cross-cultural studies (1996), I derived several new insights. I concluded: "Multicultural exposure provides a vast and variegated foundation to salvage some neglected and complex facts. It provides sensitive respect for others' values and facilitates communication between members of different cultures by recognizing and accepting the deep seated complexes which color our own outlook as well as those of other interlocutors." Among the more specific insights that I discussed, some are as follows: (1) Creativity is an infinitely endless diverse phenomenon that provides meaning and purpose to many in life and a sense of purpose in relation to the cosmos; (2) The drops in creativity found in some cultures and the failure to reach a higher level of creativity is culturally and not biologically related; (3) one's conceptualization can get broadened and illuminated as a result of positive understanding of international insights; and (4) international networks of creative people can be a very powerful force for keeping world peace and for dealing with other threats that exist tomorrow.

Incubation Model, Curriculum and Hemispheric Specialization. During the late eighties, I became interested in research on hemispheric specialization and its implications for education and talent development. As a result, I wrote a book

(Foreword by E. Paul Torrance) on *Education of the Left and the Right* (1984), which takes further the argument of how curriculum, incorporating Torrance's incubation model and future problem solving techniques, can cultivate the two halves of the brain. Torrance has underlined the significant ways this book has contributed to curriculum and designing educational experiences. A precursor of this work was my article published in the *International Review of Education* (1979) of the UNESCO Institute of Education, Hamburg. Its prepublication draft was reviewed by Joseph Bogen and many others. Discussing the present incarnation of this journal, it was reassuring to read Christopher McIntosh's (2002) assessment: "A rare example of the neuropsychological perspective is provided by a highly interesting article in the first issue of 1979 by Maharaj Raina headed 'Education of the Left and the Right' and dealing with the functioning of the two hemispheres of the brain. The author writes that if education is to develop both sides of the brain, 'it should plan learning experiences which provide endless opportunities for a balance between the right hemisphere's spatial-synthetic modality and left hemisphere's verbal-analytical modality.' Arguably the journal could profit from more articles of this kind that bring together the realm of education with that of neurobiology, biochemistry, neurophysiology and other sciences." At one point, I worked with Torrance to refine the *Style of Learning and Thinking* (SOLAT), a measure of hemispheric preference, and test its use in other cultures. We attempted a cross-cultural study using this instrument. I studied its relationship with openness to experience, sex and subject choice.

Mentor Relationships. Torrance's work on mentoring provided many leads to me to further study its role in the development of creativity and talent development in indigenous cultures. I explored how mentoring in terms of the *Guru-shishya* relationship has occurred and evolved over a period of time and the way it is embedded in the history of a culture. Georgia Studies of Creative Behavior published a monograph based on this work I contributed to Torrance's project on transcultural research and mentoring, indicating the richness and complexity of mentoring relationships. *Psychology and Developing Societies* published this work in one of its issues. Using Torrance's framework, I studied the role of mentor relationships among the talented and how this role could be further strengthened.

Teacher Creativity. Creativity in teachers remained my interest during the initial years of my work. In 1970, I made a full scale study of creativity in teachers, followed by such studies as creativity and teaching success; creativity, teaching style, pupil control ideology; teacher educators' perceptions about the ideal pupil; effect of training on attitudes towards creative teaching and learning; creativity information awareness among teacher educators; ideational fluency and motivations of teachers under training; and creativity and anxiety in Indian teachers.

Training for Creativity. In 1968, a study by me related to the effect of competition on creativity was published in the *Gifted Child Quarterly*. However, later I got into creative problem solving and published works on the effects of creative problem solving on fluency of thinking. In 1972, I published a paper on school climate and creativity; curriculum for creative development; teaching for creative endeavors; creative teaching and learning; towards a model of creative teaching;

developmental models in creativity; developing creativity through investigatory projects; creativity and teaching of science.

Longitudinal Studies on Talent and Creativity. Using National Talent Search Scholars, I made various studies of their backgrounds including the causes of dropping out, attrition rates, academic performance, etc. to examine the validity of the tools used to identify them at various stages. In the light of the findings obtained, I made a strong plea for changes in the conceptualization of talent and ways to identify it. These studies have taken the form of various published monographs. By making extensive use of Torrance and Wallach-Kogan measures, I determined how the talent search programs in India were narrow in their nature and the way they were conceptualized. These studies are available in a book form. One quite large research, which was longitudinal in its scope and design, entitled *Talent in Perspective* (1991), made a follow up study of those scholars who were identified as talented almost twenty-eight years ago. Various measures of creativity, motivation, personality and a host of other variables were used in this study. This was in many ways similar to Anne Roe's study of scientists. I am glad to share that Howard Gruber did review the prepublication draft, and it made far reaching recommendations for conceptualizing and identifying talent and giftedness.

Creative People at Work. Of late, I have been interested in studying exceptionally creative people in various fields. For a long time, I have been interested in Tagore and his creativity, and accordingly applying the network of enterprise concept to this 1913 Nobel laureate. I described and analyzed the evolution of aspects of his creative work, including his overall purpose in undertaking various enterprises (*Creativity Research Journal*, 1997). In 2000, I was invited to write on Rabindranath Tagore for the *Encyclopedia of Creativity* edited by Mark Runco.

Further, I designed a rather comprehensive study (2000) to analyze Torrance in order to understand his creativity passion by dealing with such issues as to how creativity works, what a person does when he's being creative, how the creative person organizes and deploys his or her resources to do what few others have done, and how the special organization and special set of tasks come about. Torrance, "the founding father of creativity studies," became the subject of this study since he made a difference to the world of creativity in diverse ways, through his uniqueness and through his relationships with those who inhabit that world. The intention was to provide through research a fine perspective from which to appreciate the nature of Torrance's creativity, remaining true to the goal of contributing, if possible, to the scientific understanding of creativity and creativity passion.

The study of Torrance's networks of enterprise, through various phases of his professional life cycle provided the basis for defining his uniqueness, along with density, longevity, cyclicality and the branching nature of his enterprises. It also examined Torrance's moral responsibility as it became interwoven with other features of his creative career.

The making of an individual who became a 'legend' in his own lifetime provides insights into current and future workers in the

field, and with a perspective which will possibly facilitate the growth of the field. This study has shown how transformation through self-effort, resolve, exertion, and equanimity in the face of vicissitudes of life became central to Torrance's creativity and the diverse enterprises he undertook without any selfishness and thought of reward. Based on this study, it was made clear how a state of balance and patterns of commitment, a passion for purposeful protracted hard and unremitting work, besides wisdom, becomes basic to creativity.

Torrance (2000) in the prelude to this work (*Creativity Passion: E. Paul Torrance's Voyages of Discovering Creativity*) wrote: "At the outset, let me say that I greatly appreciate the devoted labor that my friend, M K. Raina, has lavished in preparing this analytical biography of my life and work. This process is quite different from the historical biography that Garnet Millar has presented. I knew that Professor Raina was well equipped to do this kind of task. He has been involved in creativity research for over 32 years and perhaps knows my research better than anyone else. In the process of preparing this biography, he has asked many searching questions that have caused me to understand myself and my work better."

In his foreword to this work, Gruber (2000) wrote: "This is a fine book. It does not need this foreword to explain it, for the book constitutes its own best explication and defense." Reading this book, Gruber was reminded of van Gogh's remark to his brother, responding to a letter in which Theo rhapsodized about some works of art he had seen. Said Vincent: " 'People do not admire enough.' To his credit Raina is an enthusiastic admirer." To understand the nature of literary creativity in the Indian context, a study (*Psychological Studies*, 2001) was designed to examine the contributions of 38 *Jnanpith* awardees, recipients of the highest literary award in India, employing a case study approach. It analyzed the life course, network of enterprises, and the creative process of these awardees. Recently, in 2006, I contributed to the *Creativity Research Journal's* special issue on E. Paul Torrance, on his life and works and carried further my analysis of him as a person with what I called "creativity passion."

International Perspectives on Creativity Research.

International creativity research has interested me a great deal. With help from scholars in different countries, I was able to compile two volumes on international perspectives. The first volume (1980) with a foreword by J.P. Guilford included contributions from leading scholars from both the East and the West. Harry Passow spoke about this volume in his Presidential Address to the World Conference on Gifted and Talented. On his suggestion, I compiled a sequel to the 1980 volume during the late nineties which is published by the Hampton Press. I have contributed to the *UCLA Educator* (1976); *Journal of Research and Development in Education* (1971); *The Journal of Creative Behavior* (1969); *Worldwide Perspective on the Gifted Disadvantaged* (1993); *Gifted and Talented: Reaching their Potential* (1979); *G/C/T/*(1985), and *Roeper Review* (2000) on developments regarding creativity and giftedness in India.

(5) Are we currently doing enough to encourage creativity?
I strongly believe that parents and teachers are not doing much

to encourage creativity. Many children remain neglected, not enjoying psychological safety and psychological freedom. Many of our youngest and most vulnerable children remain at great risk and it is there that we should invest time and energy to see creativity flourish. We need serious efforts to make them happy and joyful.

When I attempt to analyze the present educational situation dispassionately, I find many elements missing that are listed in Torrance's "Manifesto for Children." I don't want to debate on each and every item listed therein, but any intervention to be meaningful has to consider them seriously. I consider it crucial that children be prompted to take the present and future seriously and helped to discover creative ways to live harmoniously without conflict so as to value human safety and survival. It is vital that students understand ways of conflict resolution and

what it means to be morally creative, wise and graceful.

(6) What are you currently working on?

There are so many self-imposed tasks that I want to accomplish, but my limited resources have been frustrating. I am doing some reading and writing on "Communication and creativity," "Vak (Sanskrit for "word") and creativity," and "Raj Rao and creativity." Further, I am working actively on a book length manuscript on the "Indian approach to creativity." However, my top priority at this time is to analyze how a Japanese Nobel laureate in physics and another outstanding Indian particle physicist have approached creativity and its development. I enjoy doing this analysis. There are many more tasks in the pipeline and I keep shifting from one to another, depending on my mood and urge.

Humanities: A Contracted Curriculum

Ross Butchart Vancouver, British Columbia

In 1995, Gifted Education Press published my short textbook: *Quotations for Creative Insights and Inspiration: A Quotations Based Differentiated Humanities Curriculum for Gifted Students and their Teachers in Middle and High School* (followed in 1999 by a revised second edition of the same title). My intent through this writing was to use quoted expressions from throughout history to achieve two educational goals:

- to create a unique thematic approach for enhancing students' skills of debate, research, and expository writing
- to create a forum through which students could 'explore' the words of the great thinkers from history while simultaneously confronting challenges such as contradictions, ambiguities, and different interpretations.

My position as a classroom teacher offered the advantage of being able to 'field test' my ideas and make revisions based on realistic feedback. Thus, I felt confident that I had developed a resource that would benefit teachers of gifted, and, in many instances, mainstream students. However, less than robust sales soon made it evident that my confidence was unfounded. The question then became: Why?

Today, in educational circles, value for the humanities is held in low regard – an attitude that is evident at the highest echelon of influence. Compare the following:

To lift the standards of our public schools, we achieved historic education reform – which must now be carried out in every school and in every classroom, so that every child in America can read and learn and succeed in life. - President Bush's State of the Union Address January 28, 2003
[And] we can make sure our children are prepared for the jobs of the future, and our country is more competitive, by

strengthening math and science skills. - President Bush's State of the Union Address January 23, 2007

In President Bush's 2003 address, reading is considered a skill that promotes overall learning, and thus furthers the ability for one to "succeed in life." But in his 2007 address, math and science have become ends of education, and exist not to further individual growth, but to enhance employment and economic competitiveness.

Sadly, my own province of British Columbia has not been exempt from this trend away from courses that promote individual potential. In the mid-1990's, language arts, social studies, and second language acquisition studies were grouped together under the broad heading of "Humanities" and had their allocated time for instruction – to allow for the inclusion of computer skills and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) programs – reduced from 56% to 38%. Ironically, reduction of instructional time in those subjects that placed the highest premium on reading skills (language arts, social studies) occurred at the same time that 14 of the 30 students in my grade 7 class came from an ESL (English as a Second Language) background; 8 of whom had been in the country for two years or less and were reading at a primary level on a standardized reading test.

The humanities are also a victim of high-stakes testing initiatives. Recently, I spoke to a young lady who chose not to take grade 12 history – her course of preference – in favor of a science oriented option that would allow her to obtain a higher GPA toward ever more stringent university entrance requirements. In her words: "Why should I undertake the onerous tasks of reading, research, and writing, when all I have to do is learn a few facts and plug numbers into memorized formulas?" Granted, this attitude can be characterized as simplistic; but unfortunately, this young lady – while intelligent

and articulate – has failed to realize the difference between basic schooling and acquiring a quality education. Sadly, she has taken an expedient shortcut to her future. She is not alone.

While I may be accused of being a founding member of “Luddites Anonymous” and resistant to inevitable change, I find it distressing to watch the humanities receive diminished importance in our schools’ curricula. Somehow in the last quarter century our culture has lost a balanced understanding of what constitutes the “educated person.” The irony is that, as a result, people are turning in increasing numbers to those holistic measures, be they medically or spiritually based, that promote personal fulfillment. Furthermore – and this may seem a bit of a stretch – simultaneously our schools are introducing anti-bullying, anger management, and conflict resolution programs as measures to compensate for the absence of civilized and mannerly conduct.

Recently, I saw again the 1960 movie *Inherit the Wind* in which, during a moment of intense courtroom drama, Spencer Tracy forcefully states, “The right to think is very much on trial here!” The movie, based on the Scope’s “monkey trial,” explores the emotional conflict that erupts when rigid belief is imposed upon the individual and shackles that individual’s right to think for him/herself. Today defense of individual thought seems hardly relevant as many are content to abrogate their right to think in favor of adherence to popular opinion. Our culture has created a nation of talkers over thinkers; where radio phone-in shows ‘hosted’ by glib conversationalists who invite listeners to express their opinions dominate the airwaves, opinion poll companies interrupt our nightly family dinner to conduct ‘information surveys,’ and popular pundits on TV – known as ‘personalities’ – inform us how to think. It is convenient to allow opinion to dominate over thought; it is free and undemanding. It does not require substantiation through factual evidence or the mental exertion required for honest reflection or to challenge bias. It does, however, tend to create placid sycophants of political correctness who would have us believe that an uncomplicated life is the road to contentment. (In 1490 an opinion poll survey conducted by Statsfact Corporation for the king and queen of Spain found that 99.3% of the population believed the world was flat. This finding had a margin of error of +/- 4.2%, nineteen times out of twenty. Sorry Chris, your request for funding has been refused.)

The humanities offer an avenue to revive our collective strength of character, as it is through the discipline inherent in their study that critical thinking skills are developed. Note the following definition from Wikipedia: *Critical thinking consists of a mental process of analyzing or evaluating information, particularly statements or propositions that people have offered as true.*

Or: *Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.* (www.criticalthinking.org)

Bloom’s higher-order thinking skills are very much evident in these definitions, as is the necessity for intellectual integrity, discipline, and active involvement in pursuit of truth. Are these traits not to be desired for citizens in a democracy? And while they are required to produce modes of thought within scientific thinking and mathematical thinking, most often they are pursued only within the syllabi of programs traditionally recognized as forming the humanities. For example, San Jose State University offers critical thinking courses in Communication Studies, English, History, Linguistics and Language Development, Philosophy, and Psychology with no mention of the sciences or mathematics.

In a previous issue of *GEPO* (Winter 2007), teacher Janis Purnell¹ made the following statement, “A good teacher is able to take the driest and most unexciting concept and turn it into something valuable and compelling. I strive to do that with every subject, but I have found that history is the one that lends itself most beautifully to this task” (p. 10). She then went on to explain how she developed project-based and performance task activities that allowed gifted students “. . .to apply history to events in the present day” (p. 12). However, also implicit in Ms. Purnell’s article is the notion that the “educated person” is not only able to view past events while living present day realities, but is also one who understands historical events and can project him/herself into a historical medium. These are recognized abilities of the most capable. (It may also explain in part the popularity of the Discovery and History channels on TV.)

I invite you to undertake an assignment I frequently gave to my students – find the connection(s) between the following sets of quotations:

- The history of the world is but the biography of great men.*
Thomas Carlyle
- Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. . .* Abraham Lincoln
- We are all citizens of history.* Clifton Fadiman
- * * * * *
- Good education is the essential foundation of a strong democracy.* Barbara Bush
- There can be no daily democracy without daily citizenship.*
Ralph Nader
- Democracy is based on the conviction that man has the moral and intellectual capacity, as well as the inalienable right, to govern himself with reason and justice.* Harry S. Truman

Can there be little doubt that in the study of history one can see the interwoven strands of human endeavor, biography, citizenship, education, morality, and daily living? And where, but among the humanities, are these areas most studied?

¹Janis Purnell (2007). Project-based and performance task activities for teaching history and social studies to the gifted. *Gifted Education Press Quarterly*, 21(1), 9-12.

One of my country's greatest literary scholars, the late Northrop Frye, said that societies are like people: When they lose their memory, they effectively become senile. Expanding upon these thoughts, Peter Seixas of the University of British Columbia posed the following: "Suppose you woke up one morning and you had no memory. You don't remember where you'd been, so you confront problem by problem as you perceive them at the moment. Where would that leave you? Transpose that situation to a society, to a country, to a world, and ask yourself: 'With how much depth of wisdom can we make our way in the world without knowing something about the past? What kind of knowledge do we have at our disposal to make the decisions we have to make? How do we even know who we are?' We've lost our bearing once we've lost our history."

Ken Osborne of the University of Manitoba also believes that history is crucial to prepare young people to participate as citizens in a pluralistic democracy. "They need to know what human behavior has been over the centuries – the best and the worst. They need the knowledge of the past as a context and a framework for the present. It gives them a sense of alternatives. Things don't necessarily have to be the way they are. They weren't always the way they are. They do change; they have changed; they can be changed."

Osborne also believes that loss of a "sense of connectiveness" through a lack of knowledge about their history disconnects young people from seeing themselves as a link to the past and to the future. This, in turn, creates an isolation that promotes "a kind of excessive individualism – all 'me, me, me' and 'rights,

rights, rights' without a real sense of what their predecessors did and how they lived. Students don't know how they fit into the sequence of time and events." But, according to Osborne, the study of history leads to informed citizenship, because, "If they [young people] understand their history, they can see how people have participated in social and human affairs over the years. They can see how people can make a difference."

History, as a discrete area of study within the humanities, furthers an understanding of the democratic process necessary for informed decision-making, as well as awareness of one's cultural heritage, and the value of empowerment for young people on the threshold of becoming adult citizens.

In this article, by focusing on the benefits attained from mastering critical thinking skills and studying history, I set out to defend a need for the humanities in our schools and argue for greater academic balance by challenging what has become a 'contracted curriculum' – a curriculum in which courses in mathematics, science, and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) programs have gained exalted prominence at the expense of those that promote enduring values. In truth, however, defense of the humanities lies not in my words, but in the superior words and achievements of the great poets, musicians, philosophers, historians, psychologists, ecclesiastics, politicians, economists, and jurists – those whose very existence has enriched our world and offered testament to the ultimate in human achievement. The beauty they created, the principles they promoted, the visions for the betterment of humankind they were able to foresee – these are worthy of learning. Study the humanities!

In Memoriam: Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007) and Multifaceted Giftedness

Michael E. Walters

Center for the Study of the Humanities in the Schools

"Reading exercises the imagination – tempts it to go from strength to strength."

"And I believe that reading and writing are the most nourishing forms of meditation anyone has so far found." Quotations from **Palm Sunday** (1981, p. 150) by Kurt Vonnegut.

Kurt Vonnegut represented multidimensional facets of giftedness. His reputation was established by his novels, short stories, plays, and essays. However, his academic training was in science and technology fields. Vonnegut attended Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Tennessee (both under the auspices of the United States Army) where he studied mechanical engineering, and eventually was involved in combat during World War II in one of the most vicious battles, the Battle of the Bulge. After his unit was nearly decimated, he wandered for several days behind enemy lines until he was captured by the Germans. While being held prisoner in Dresden, Germany, Vonnegut witnessed the terrible firestorm resulting from allied bombing (1945). The Battle of the Bulge and the destruction of Dresden haunted him for the remainder of his life. He wrote a classic novel based upon these experiences, **Slaughterhouse Five or The Children's Crusade** (1969). After the war ended, the author studied for a master's degree in anthropology at the University of Chicago. In 1947, he worked in public relations for General Electric in Schenectady, New York, and later became a teacher of emotionally disturbed children in Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

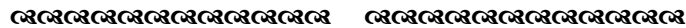
Vonnegut suffered from depression throughout his life. However, despite personal struggles concerning his depressed state of mind, he succeeded in producing a large literary output, e.g., 14 novels and 5 books of essays. In all of these books, he was constantly seesawing between social idealism and a sense of pessimism concerning the long term survival of humanity. His psychic conflict was eloquently

described in his last book, **A Man Without A Country** (2005). All of his writings blended the literary formats of science fiction, humor and social satire. Vonnegut's literary mentor was Mark Twain – both authors were from the Midwest.

In a collection of short stories, **Welcome to the Monkey House** (1968), there is one story particularly relevant to gifted education, **Harrison Bergeron**. It was discussed by the gifted educator, Stephen Schroeder-Davis in his book entitled, **Coercive Egalitarianism: A Study of Discrimination Against Gifted Children** (1993, Gifted Education Press). In this satirical story, a federal agency is established in the future (2081) whose leader is the United States Handicapper General, Diana Moon Glampers. According to Constitutional Amendments 211, 212 and 213, everyone must look the same, be as strong as everyone else and be on the same intellectual level. The main character, Harrison Bergeron, a gifted and talented teenager, is captured and executed by agents of the US Handicapper General. What is so astounding is that Vonnegut wrote this in 1961, therefore anticipating many of the philosophical and practical issues now confronting gifted education.

One of Vonnegut's last novels was **Bluebeard** (1987) – a fictional work about the literary and artistic community around Southampton, Long Island as described through the life of an abstract expressionist painter. The protagonist of this novel, an Armenian-American artist named Rabo Karabekian, has special relevance to recent events. As of April 2007, the United States Senate is trying to vote on a resolution describing the massacre of Armenians during World War I by the Turkish government (aided by German officers) as genocide. In **Bluebird**, Rabo is a child of survivors of this Armenian tragedy.

Vonnegut in **A Man Without A Country** was intensely concerned with the ecological specter facing our planet. At the end of this intellectual memoir, he wrote a poem called (**Requiem**, p. 137), lamenting insensitivity towards our planet's ecology. Indeed Vonnegut's legacy is his multifaceted expression of giftedness.



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