

# ECHA NEWS

EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR HIGH ABILITY

SPRING 2018

## Presidential Report to the ECHA General Assembly 2018

**Dear ECHA Members,**

This report covers less than one year from our 2017 General Assembly last September in Brugg-Windisch, Switzerland. ECHA was continuing its 30-years traditions to serve its members. Let me highlight a few points of this work from the past year.

■ ECHA celebrated its 30th birthday. It was on 29th May 1987, when ECHA was founded in Utrecht, and it was on 10th November 1988, when the first ECHA Conference started in Zürich, establishing ECHA as a viable organisation. The General Committee decided to celebrate the 30th birthday by collecting information on all past ECHA Conferences and by publishing them on the ECHA website. Please find the summaries here: <http://echa.info/echa-conferences>. I am thankful to Ragnild Zonneveld, the president of the Dutch ECHA Association for her work to assemble the rich material.

■ The first thematic ECHA Conference on Creativity will be in Dubrovnik (Croatia) on 16-18 October 2019. The 17th International ECHA Conference will be in Porto (Portugal) on 9-12 September 2020. In early 2019 we will publish the call for the second thematic ECHA Conference in 2021. With these, the flow of ECHA Conferences will become continuous, and each of our annual General Assemblies will be held at one of the ECHA Conferences.

We have a stable number of paying members of ECHA, having more than three hundred members now. We are continuing our tradition to invite all participants of the Dublin ECHA Conference, who were



Prof. Peter Csermely president of ECHA

not members of ECHA, to become a "conference member" between September 2018 and 2019. "Conference members" receive ECHA News, and ECHA newsletters and may obtain High Ability Studies for a nominal price of 27 EUR (33 USD) by paying at <http://echa.info/membership>. Please note that from the start of 2018 you may also pay your ECHA membership using PayPal. Thanks to our Secretary, Colm O'Reilly and our web-master Emily Church, ECHA introduced a new membership application system, which sends automatic responses and renewal notices. We hope that this system will significantly reduce the number of previous – justified – complaints that ECHA received from the members. The General Committee introduced a new understanding of the duration of ECHA membership by dividing the year into four quarters. In this way it is not an economic

disadvantage to become an ECHA member e.g. in April, since this membership is not expiring at the end of the year (as in the former system) but in March 31st the following year. The growing interest in the European Talent Support Network will help us to increase our membership further.

■ After a detailed and meticulous work the ECHA Education Board finalized the basic components and conditions of ECHA training, including the details of the application and evaluation of trainings which want to become ECHA trainings. By the time of the General Assembly detailed information will be available on this on the ECHA website. Interested members may contact Lianne Hoogeveen for more information at [training@echa.info](mailto:training@echa.info).

■ Our scientific journal, High Ability Studies, has increased its impact factor from 0.737 to 1.13. Its circulation number and downloads are also increasing. Great thanks to all contributors and to the Editor-in-chief, Albert Ziegler!

■ We continued the distribution of the spring and autumn issues of ECHA News as a pdf file directly to our members. Many thanks to Annette Heinbokel for her continuous efforts to fill ECHA News with high-quality content! Please help her more in this!

■ Thanks to the efforts of Victor Müller-Oppliger, most ECHA National Correspondents have been re-elected, and members were able to read the reports of more than half of them in the last three issues of ECHA News. We will continue this series, and will re-vitalize this key asset of ECHA in other ways, too.

>>> page 2

■ The Facebook-Group of ECHA increased its membership from 500 to 2100 and has a very actively changing and high quality content. Many thanks for those who contribute to the site regularly – including our vice-president, Albert Ziegler, who has frequent posts. Please join our Facebook site (if you have not done so), and follow Albert's example to share your findings, ideas and questions with this growing community.

■ Last but not least, following the decision of the 2014 General Assembly to help and guide the European Talent Support Network, I am happy to report that the Network has more than 300 cooperating nodes in more than forty countries in Europe and all around the world. In 2018 the Qualification Committee of ECHA qualified three new Talent Centres in Belgium, Portugal and the United Arab Emirates. With this the number of Talent Centres rose to 23. The 3rd meeting of the Talent Centre Representatives was very successful in February 2018. The Network is served by its Council led by Albert Ziegler and by its coordinator and secretary, Csilla Fuszek. The Council established its plans to enlist the network as an NGO to enable it to get funds for the operation of the Network. The Network has its Youth Platform which also elected its Council led by Armin Fabian. The Youth Platform organised two very successful European Youth Summits in 2016 and 2017 and started a number of joint projects. As the Dublin Conference will do successfully, all future international and thematic ECHA Conferences will incorporate a European Youth Summit making a new tradition related to ECHA.

These were some of the important highlights of ECHA's work in the past year. However, the most important part, the personal contacts, the exchange of best practices and the joy of cooperation cannot be really described in a report. This ECHA-spirit is growing further opening new chapters in the history of our organisation. Many thanks to all of you for your contribution!

**Peter Csermely**, President of ECHA  
Contact: [csermelynet@gmail.com](mailto:csermelynet@gmail.com)

## FINANCIAL REPORT 01 JANUARY 2017 - 31 DECEMBER 2017

**TESSA KIEBOOM**, TREASURER, BELGIUM Contact: [tessa.kieboom@cbo-antwerpen.be](mailto:tessa.kieboom@cbo-antwerpen.be)

Opening Balance 01.01.2017	51 165,42 €
----------------------------	-------------

IN	OUT
full membership (*)	14 371,83 €
student membership (*)	235,68 €
corporate membership (*)	3 333,20 €
transaction fees	6,05 €
paypal	0,23 €
fee conference Dublin 2018	7 000,00 €
<b>Total IN</b>	<b>24 946,99 €</b>
	(*) as a result of credit card payments membership fees are no longer rounded figures because of costs charged
<b>Total OUT</b>	<b>11 110,85 €</b>

CLOSING BALANCE 31.12.2017	65 001,56 €
----------------------------	-------------

## CONTENT SPRING 2018

■ <b>President's Report</b>	1
■ <b>Financial Report 2017</b>	2
■ <b>Editorial</b>	3
■ <b>Meeting of European Talent Centre Representatives</b>	5
■ <b>A Mental Step Back</b>	7
■ <b>What's a Valid Way to Select Students for a Gifted Programme?</b>	9
■ <b>Reports by National Correspondents of ECHA</b>	12
■ <b>CANADA</b>	12
■ <b>CROATIA</b>	14
■ <b>FINLAND</b>	17
■ <b>GERMANY</b>	18
■ <b>ROMANIA</b>	19
■ <b>SLOVENIA</b>	20
■ <b>Teachers' Corner</b>	21
■ <b>German Association for the Gifted Child (DGhK), Bavarian Regional Branch</b>	23
■ <b>Māori girl playing chess</b>	23

## Editorial

**ANNETTE HEINBOKEL, GERMANY**

This is again very interesting newsletter, and I would like to thank all those who contributed to it.

As I am a very practical person, I particularly liked Eleonor van Gerven's article on how to select students for a gifted programme.

It made me think of my way of selecting children for an enrichment option when I was still teaching. I started and ran an enrichment programme from 1997 (that was 5 years before my state of Lower Saxony officially started gifted education) till this type of school was abolished in 2004 at a type of school called orientation level. It covered the grades 5 and 6, the years between primary and secondary school. It was done as a pull-out programme. My colleagues were not too keen on a lot of in-service training, so this is the way I explained the selection process to them:

Every teacher who takes over a new class knows the very high and the very low achievers in this setting after about 4-6 weeks. She / he may make misjudgements, of course, but they can be mended any time later. If the high achievers (which often, but not always include the gifted) miss school for a day or even for a week because they have got the flu, no-one is particularly worried: the teachers and classmates will inform the child about the material that has been covered, what she/he has to catch up on. If no-one is worried about missing several days of school, they can easily leave regular lessons for some time. In our school they had permission to leave lessons for enrichment for up to two periods a week. I'm sure we would have been flexible if there had been a greater need by an individual child, but the question never arose. It was up to a child to choose a course, the parents to agree for the child to attend and the teacher concerned to let the girl or the boy go. So the maths teacher might have said say 'yes', the English teacher 'no' or vice versa. This permission did not depend on the average of all the grades a child had, neither on any IQ results, but on the openmindedness of the teacher concerned.

One example: I was offering a short course to prepare for an exhibition on the middle ages. A girl, who was not gifted at all, and there was no hidden giftedness either, was very keen on taking part. She was simply very interested. The lesson she would be missing was religious education, that was taught twice a week, so she would be missing fifty per cent of the RE lessons. Her grade in that subject was a D (German system: 4). I suggested, "Ask your teacher, if he lets you go you may take part." The teacher said "If your grades don't get any worse than D it's ok." I brought my old doll and she made the clothes for Uta, a famous German noblewoman from the middle ages (You can google her: Uta von Naumburg), which we later put in an exhibition on the middle ages.

This system does not solve the problem of gifted underachievers. For them we needed extra information, from the parents, a very observant teacher, the school psychologist ... whoever.

After a while some teachers would let groups of up to 5-6 children go (we never had so many gifted children in one class), knowing they would have done their homework for the next lesson. One particularly narrowminded colleague never let anyone go, not even obviously gifted ones. One can't force people to be openminded.

When Graeme Miller read the text about the German girl gifted in playing chess in vol 31 / 2 of ECHA News, it reminded him of a Māori girl equally gifted in chess (see page 23). Shortly afterwards I came across an article on Phiona Mutesi, the chess queen of Africa. It is chance that in all these three cases the chess players are girls.

Phiona and her family lived in Uganda's crime-ridden Katwe slum, one of the most challenging places on earth<sup>1</sup>. By the age of nine she had dropped out of school.

Robert Katende, her chess teacher, was also born in a slum. However, he was an excellent football player and joined a Christian football club. This also allowed him to attend school. As a young adult he brought football and a little food to other slum kids, some of those had no interest in playing football, though. He thought of another activity and decided to try chess,

which he had learned at school. Phiona's brother was one of the boys being taught, and one day she followed him. She was fascinated by the playing pieces and by the quietness of the players.

Her first teacher was Gloria, a four-year-old girl who knew little more than the names of the pieces and how they moved. Phiona learned through trial and error, and after a year it turned out she had a gift for the game. "Chess is a lot like my life," she said. "If you make smart moves you can stay away from danger, but any bad decision could be your last." She lost about the first 50 matches because she played recklessly, wanting to win as quickly as possible, then Robert Katende taught her to play with calm, patience and foresight.

In 2009 Phiona and two boys from Katende's chess club took part in Africa's International Children's Chess Tournament in Sudan. Although being the youngest, they defeated teams from 16 African nations and won the championship.

Phiona's story has been turned into a book and a film, both called 'The Queen of Katwe'.

Every person is influenced by chance: what we are born with and the circumstances that life presents us with. Saskia, the Māori girl and Phiona were twice lucky: first by finding an activity that interested them, secondly by meeting the right teacher. We can't influence chance. However, every adult, every kindergardener, teacher, relative, family friend, neighbour can be 'the right person at the right time'. We all just have to be aware of the interests and abilities of children – all children, not just the gifted ones – and support them as best we can.

**Annette Heinbokel, editor**

Contact: [annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de](mailto:annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de)

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global/2016/aug/28/chess-queen-of-africa-phiona-mutesi>

**Keynote speakers:**

**K. Anders Ericsson**

(Florida State University, U.S.A.)

**Albert Ziegler**

(University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany)

**Africa Borges**

(University of La Laguna, Spain)

**Dolores Valadez Sierra**

(University of Guadalajara, Mexico)

**Dolores Prieto**

(University of Murcia, Spain)

**Carmén Pomar**

(University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain)

**Zenita C. Guenther**

(CEDELT / ASPAT-Lavras, Brazil)

**Marcelino Pereira**

(University of Coimbra, Portugal)

**Daniela J. Pereira**

(Hospital and University Center of Coimbra, Portugal)

**Sara Bahia**

(University of Lisbon, Portugal)

# HIGH ABILITIES, TALENT AND HIGH PERFORMANCE

# ANEIS XIII INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS '18

REGISTRATION

[WWW.ANEIS.ORG](http://WWW.ANEIS.ORG)

CONGRESS02018@ANEIS.ORG

17·18·19  
MAY '18

**D. DIOGO DE SOUSA  
MUSEUM  
BRAGA | PORTUGAL**

---

#### Organizing Committee

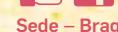
Congress Chair: Alberto Rocha (ANEIS, Portugal)

Members of the Committee: Cristina Palhares (ANEIS, Portugal); Marcelino Pereira (ANEIS, Portugal & Univ. of Coimbra); Leandro S. Almeida (ANEIS, Portugal & Univ. of Minho); Sara Bahia (ANEIS, Portugal & Univ. of Lisbon); Helena Fonseca (ANEIS, Portugal); Ana Almeida (ANEIS, Porto); Catarina Figueiredo (ANEIS, Porto); Jerónimo Maia (ANEIS, Porto); Maria Tavares (ANEIS, Braga); Luís Silva (ANEIS, Braga); Carlos Gonçalves (ANEIS, Braga); Carla Paiva (ANEIS, Braga); Flávia Alves (ANEIS, Braga); Ana Beiramar (ANEIS, Braga); Susana Inverno (ANEIS, Braga).

1998  
2018  
anos



associação nacional  
estudo e intervenção na  
sobreddotação



Sede - Braga  
rua de S. Geraldo nº 41  
4700-041 Braga

tel.: 966 325 986  
congresso2018@aneis.org  
www.aneis.org

**FCT** Fundação  
para a Ciência  
e a Tecnologia



# Meeting of European Talent Centre Representatives

8-9 February 2018 – Budapest



Prof. Albert Ziegler, Dr. Alberto Rocha, Dr. Lianne Hoogeveen, Dr. Yolanda Benito, Dr. Khalifa Al Suwaidi, Dr. Stijn Smeets, Prof. Csermely Péter

## CSILLA FUSZEK, HUNGARY

Representatives of the centres of the European Talent Support Network (ETSN) met for the third time on 8-9 February 2018 in Budapest. The first occasion was the September 2015 Brussels inaugural meeting of representatives of the 14 Talent Centres founding the Network, outlining the main development guidelines and the first common tasks. Many of the activities/plans concerned have been implemented in the meantime; members of the Network applied for developing EGIFT online training materials (MOOC) with success<sup>1</sup>. Following three calls for prospective European Talent Points, the Network has become more and more widespread: by January 2018, around 350 Talent Points in 42 countries had registered with the Network, and the number of European Talent Centres rose from 14 to 23, including

20 European and 3 non-European ones (located in the United Arab Emirates, in India and in Peru, respectively) over the 2.5 years since the first meeting.

The second meeting of representatives of 16 of the 19 ETSN centres took place in October 2016. The so-called Network Council<sup>2</sup>, in charge of Network strategy for two years, became operational there.

The recent, third, official meeting was attended by a particularly high number of representatives, 35 persons from 19 countries, that is, many brought colleagues to involve as many as possible from each centre in the common tasks of the European Talent Support Network, to familiarise them with the Network and let them contribute to its development. All but one member countries were represented, and it was a special pleasure that the three non-European so-called "Associated European

Talent Centres" also sent their delegates.

It is almost a tradition that such meetings first of all summarise the activities of the ECHA Qualification Committee, then give an opportunity for new Talent Centre members to introduce themselves. The first presentation was held by Dr. Lianne Hoogeveen, head of the ECHA Qualification Committee, on the outcome of the Call in 2017. After that, together with Prof. Péter Csermely, President of ECHA and Prof. Albert Ziegler, President of ETSN, she handed over the certificate symbolising ETSN membership to the new European Talent Centres.

>>> next page



Meeting of the representatives of the centres of the European Talent Support Network (ETSN) in Budapest

As for the introductions, first the new Leuven Talent Centre for Flanders was presented by Dr. Stijn Smeets, then Dr. Khalifa Al Suwaidi from the Arab Emirate spoke of Dubai-based Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Centre for Giftedness and Creativity, and Helena Fonseca filled in the audience on the activities of the National Association for the Study and Intervention in Giftedness in Portugal. Finally, Dr. Yolanda Benito, head of the Spanish Huerta del Rey Talent Centre described their work.

The heads of three more Talent Centres qualified earlier reported on key events at their sites: Zvono Bednarcik from Slovakia, Prof. Sheyla Blumen from Peru and Dr. Narayan Desai from India.

The most important events of the past 16 months at ETSN were summarised by Prof. Albert Ziegler. Significant achievements in the past 1.5 year included the finalisation of the ETSN website<sup>3</sup>, the release of the first newsletter<sup>4</sup>, and the completion of the Article of the organisation.

After the lunch break, Lukáš Kyzlík and Ármin Fábián reported on events at the Youth Platform gathering the youth of the Network; then Dr. Colm O'Reilly reviewed the EGIFT project and Orla Dunne outlined preparations for the 2018 ECHA Conference. Antonios Apostolou supplemented the presentation by Prof. Albert Ziegler by a description of the Network's Talentweb Newsletter<sup>5</sup>.

Later on Talent Centre heads split into groups to exchange ideas on the upcoming tasks of the Network. They discussed how to strengthen connections between Talent Points and Talent Centres, the scope of responsibilities of Talent Centres, the role of Associated Talent Centres within the Network, and ways and means to enhance intra-Network contacts. Group work was followed by a plenary session and dinner.

**Csilla Fuszek** is the founding director of the European Talent Centre Budapest. Since 2009 she has been working with the Association of Hungarian Talent Support Organisations on nationwide talent support projects focusing on creating a Nationwide Talent Support Network. She was elected as the Secretary of the ECHA Qualification Committee and was elected as the coordinator of the European Talent Support Network.

Contact: [fuszekcs@gmail.com](mailto:fuszekcs@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.talentcentrebudapest.eu/content/egift-transnational-meeting-budapest>

<sup>2</sup> <http://etsn.eu/council-members/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://etsn.eu/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://etsn.eu/talentweb-newsletter/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://etsn.eu/talentweb-newsletter/>

# A Mental Step Back

LAILI SAKIJEVA, LATVIA

When looking at big-size paintings in a museum, we automatically step back in order to see the whole picture. It would not be possible to see and perceive the picture if standing very close and being able to see only part of it.

When looking back in the past, we see if a person has been talented, gifted or of genius by evaluating his/her contribution to the whole society irrespective of his/her character, social background, education and contemporaries' appreciation. But it is not unequivocal when looking at the present when labels "gifted" and "talented" are used in their broadest sense. We say that an opera singer is talented if he/she performs the same arias better than the others that his/her predecessors have been performing them for centuries but who we do not remember any more. Or we say that a scientist is talented if he/she has discovered a certain detail in an already existing system<sup>1</sup>.

The most common meanings of the terms "gifted" and "talented" in the education system are "an increased capacity to perform something", "the ability to repeat well some known activities" and "academic achievements in one or several fields".

When looking at the picture named 'education system' without taking this step back, one cannot see that the old good picture does not fit in the rapidly changing world any more. All attempts to refresh (or reform) the picture look like crushing and crowding at some particular detail giving no attention to what the whole education system should be. A new picture should start with a new concept.

Recently, I had an opportunity to participate in the Erasmus+ project "School of Talents" and be involved in designing the concept of Talented Education. Here is an excerpt from the project materials outlining the basic principles of Talented Education which I believe could serve as the big picture and reveal new research directions<sup>2</sup>.

**"One has to teach the principles of knowledge modification and not knowledge itself**

[..] Nowadays pedagogy is concerned with training people who can skilfully recreate and use the acquired knowledge that is recognised as correct. If we care to educate truly talented people, we have to reject this aim. The world is facing a new situation: the content of knowledge is changing constantly and will continue to change faster than it can reach educational establishments. [...]

*The next generation, the pupils we are teaching today will face the world with knowledge changing at an extremely rapid speed. Do we really want our children to waste half of their lives on acquiring outdated knowledge? Is this the fate we want for us and our descendants, for the world they will live in?*

*Fortunately, it is not all that bad. Knowledge changes consistently, not chaotically. Today we not only know that these consistencies exist, but we also know what they are.*

Hence the conclusion: the object of new pedagogy should be regularities in the change of knowledge and concepts. Moreover, it has to consider not only scientific, technical, artistic and economic concepts but also moral and ethical standards that are bound to rapid changes as well. And these changes are fundamental! But the most important thing that matters is that they change in conformity with certain laws.

*At this point we have a clear vision of the new, talented pedagogy. Its object is consistent changes in conceptualisation.*

***One has to teach how to create new knowledge, not how to use it.***

[..] **We consume** our education. What if the situation changes? If the product cannot be consumed any longer? Then we will start complaining that the good old days have passed. We have been schooled so well to consume canonised knowledge that we will stop at nothing to preserve it unchanged!

*Stagnation and lack of development are not caused by some strange people but by ourselves. We have been successfully schooled for this.*

*Hundreds, thousands and even millions of talented people will no longer be able to ensure accelerated change of knowledge in all spheres of human life. They will simply not manage. They are not coping with it already. The only way out for humanity is to understand that each and every human has to support permanent change of knowledge!*

***New knowledge can only be created by individually conducted research.***

[..] We have to understand that it is impossible to create new knowledge and concepts within the rigid framework of conventional paradigms. [...]

*This is the essence of genuine, high level research: not to wait for mystical enlightenment but work at new conceptions; not to repeat universal truths but create new knowledge.[..]*

***Only a teacher-researcher can train a student-researcher.***

[..] One of the peculiarities of high level research is that new concepts come to a researcher very slowly; moreover, the route of these new ideas is not always predictable. We still fail to formalize many things (I hope it is a temporary situation); they are developed in the course of the working process. So we cannot but use the medieval model "master-student". There is one exception: modern student researchers armed with the Theory of Talented Thinking can and should promote new concepts which are novel even to their teachers.

*But what exactly should Teachers of Talents study? They might do research in some separate fields of their pedagogical branch. Yet it would be better if the scope of their research were as wide as possible. One of the unexpected results of high level research is that every new conclusion triggers dozens of new questions. Hence, there will be enough new subjects for everyone to research.*

**The training environment should be the entire surrounding culture rather than a closed school.**

Until the age of 9-11 for boys and 8-9 for girls, (children in an aboriginal educational system) observe the behaviour of adults, play appropriate games and help the adults. On reaching the age, a girl goes over to the family of her betrothed husband and a boy moves to the family of his future wife. Under supervision of the older wives the girl acquires skills necessary for gathering food and raising children, but the boy is taught to hunt and orientate himself in the massive semi-deserts. At the end of the training period the boys pass a special exam and get the promised wife, and the girls become rightful wives.

This might seem an example of an underdeveloped society, but mind that there are no weak students with unsatisfactory performance in an aboriginal educational system. Is it not the dream of our educational gurus?

It is our modern school that was changed into a reservation long ago. If we consider its lifestyle, the content of the knowledge it gives and the tasks it provides, we will understand that it has nothing in common with a modern environment.

Developing the conception of Talented Education we do not have to dwell too long upon the issue of what the school should be like. We have to proceed from the idea that there should be no school whatsoever!

*The entire surrounding life and culture have to become educational!*

*Indeed, this would require reconstruction of the entire human culture and not just the educational system. And it is a good challenge for our abilities and our mental force. This task is worthy of the Man! [..]*

*What we need is Educational Culture! All of it! [..]*

*At this point we face the first problems, the first subjects for elaboration. Any teacher is able to tackle these subjects provided that the teacher will dare take them up.*

- *It is not clear yet how the elements of our culture should be arranged so that they performed their educational function without detriment to the basic functions. And how shall we coordinate the operation of these elements?*

- *To be able to perform functions of arithmetic teachers, sales people and customers should have some pedagogical training. This concerns all the mankind. How do we organise mass pedagogical training?*

- *The Education of any person should be based on his or her individual experience. We cannot teach addition if the child has not acquired numerals. So, how do we immediately determine whether the child can or cannot identify numerals? These are just some of the problems of Educational Culture. Many more are still to come. The*

*very idea of research and development lies in considering these problems and finding the right solutions."*

**Laili Sakijeva, Mmath,** is the Director of "Foundation ASNI" and ECHA national correspondent of Latvia

Contact: [laili@fondsasni.lv](mailto:laili@fondsasni.lv)

<sup>1</sup> Murashkovskiy, Yuli, Sakijeva, Laili. Gifted Children: Input or Output of the Education System? 3rd International Conference "Gifted Children: Challenges and Possibilities", 2015, Kaunas.

<sup>2</sup> The following text in italics is quoted from:

Theory and Practice of Training in Talented and Innovative Thinking in Schools. Part 2. [online] (retrieved on 25.09.2017).

Available: [http://www.fondsasni.lv/uploads/files/files/School\\_of\\_Talents\\_Part\\_2.pdf](http://www.fondsasni.lv/uploads/files/files/School_of_Talents_Part_2.pdf)

# What's a Valid Way to Select Students for a Gifted Programme?

ELEONOR W.J.M. VAN GERVEN,  
NETHERLANDS

On a regular basis teachers ask me how they should select students for their programmes for the gifted<sup>1</sup>. Teachers look for a set of easy-to-use criteria that are unambiguous to interpret in order to determine who can or cannot join special enrichment projects organised in pull-out programmes. This expressed need for crystal clear selection criteria shows that the organisation of the education for the gifted is a complex issue for many schools. The complexity of this issue increases if these programmes have to be organised within the concept of inclusive education, as is the situation in Dutch schools (Borland, 2005; van Gerven, 2016a). This is because from a certain perspective pull-out programmes for gifted students can be seen as segregation, a departure from the concept of inclusion. However one can also easily argue that these programmes are organised from the inclusive point of view that education should create maximum opportunities for each student to develop his potential and that the educational objectives are better served in these pull-out programmes (van Gerven, 2016b).

Every time teachers drop this fundamental question on me, honesty compels me to reply that I really don't have a clue who should enter a programme or not. So many factors influence this selection process that it differs from school to school where students' participation to a pull-out programme is relevant (van Gerven, 2016b). However, if you want to set standards for selection there are some considerations that are relevant for every school. These considerations are discussed in this article.

For me, the central question is whether you look for students who fit into your programme or that you want to respond to the educational needs of every student, including the needs of the gifted student. One should ask oneself, "Am I looking

for students who are a match for my educational approach or am I trying to see how I can adjust my educational approach to serve my students as well as possible?" To answer this question, it is important that you discuss the function of the Alternative Educational Arrangement (AEA) you want to organise amongst your team of teachers. Because if function takes precedence over shape not all the adjustments to your educational approach have to be organised in a pull-out programme (Janson, 2016). However, changing the shape of the arrangement does not solve the selection problem.

An AEA can best be described as any pedagogic-didactic intervention that departs from the basic education strategies you normally use (van Gerven, 2014). Thus this definition exceeds the idea of an enrichment class or pull-out programme. A student working on a selection of enrichment assignments is in fact already offered an AEA (van Gerven & Hoogenberg, 2011). Also, if you let a student work on enrichment assignments in his own classroom, you also have to decide why this student applies and why other students don't. In fact, an enrichment class is nothing more than just another variation in the way you can organise education. For most schools it seems easier to cluster students with apparently the same needs in a pull-out programme than to adjust the individual student's programme within the limitations of the daily classroom (Janson, 2009). However it doesn't matter what arrangements a school team wants to offer, in all situations teams should be held accountable for how they select their participants (Eyre, 2007). Therefore a fundamental discussion about whether an AEA is needed and how an AEA can best be organised should precede the selection procedure for an AEA (van Gerven E, 2014).

## Six pitfalls

The selection process for an AEA in a peer group setting is influenced by the flexibility of pedagogic-didactic interventions that

are offered to all students. If you're already able to work with a three tiered structure dividing your group of students based on a Bell curve, than additional interventions would not be necessary for most of your students. Thus a relatively small group might have needs that differ from the top 20 % who are already being catered for in this three tiered structure (Drent & van Gerven, 2012). None the less we know that it is relatively difficult to implement interventions that extend beyond the top tier in this three tiered structure (Kuipers, 2016). Effectively not only the student's needs, but also the teacher's capacity to provide a more in depth differentiation bound by regular classroom management strategies influences the selection procedure (van Gerven, 2014).

Generally education in enrichment classes is underpinned by various assumptions about what can be defined as 'good' for gifted students. Those assumptions are based on personal traits that are often ascribed to gifted students. If this approach is taken, the selection procedure will be determined by the degree to which these traits in potential candidates for the enrichment class are observed by the teacher.

Here the first pitfall emerges. Every isolated trait that can be observed in a gifted student can be recognized in any other student as well (Mika, 2005; Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilus, & Worrel, 2011). The traits are part of a normative concept that places each and every one of them on a continuum between 'not visible to highly visible'. However the visibility depends on the opportunity a student has to express specific behaviour (Venderickx, 2017; Sternberg & Zhang, 1995). If one can't observe a specific trait in a student, instead of dismissing the possibility that the student can be gifted, one should consider whether the optimal circumstances were created for a student to express these traits to the extent that the intensity of the trait within a gifted student is expected. Being successfully intelligent requires a teacher who creates

opportunities to become successfully intelligent (Matthews & Folsom, 2009; Sternberg, 2009).

Quite apart from these considerations, it should be realised that one swallow does not make a summer. If only some traits are to be observed and if these traits can only be observed in an almost clinically created situation, it is hardly likely that this student will be successfully intelligent in a situation that doesn't have the extreme support of this clinical situation. It is always the combination of several characteristics, which become visible in different situations and in different circumstances over a longer period of time, that is more reliable. Parental input to complete observations is therefore very important (De Bruin-De Boer & Kuipers, 2011; van Gerven & Drent, 2004-2016). Furthermore it should be realized that although these traits might give some information about the student's educational needs, they are not enough to draw definite conclusions about a student's intellectual capacity (van Gerven, 2015).

The second trap is that if these particular traits have not been observed in a student, it means he or she is 'not gifted'. Besides educational opportunities to exhibit these traits there is the effect of socialisation. Socialisation in respect to unwritten behavioural rules is a very important aspect in the educational process. So being an accepted member of the age group they are in, is important for children. A lack of adjustment to those rules means that the student can become excluded from his peers. In order to avoid this exclusion, a student might decide that being a member of the group is more important than self-actualization based on natural capacities (Guyt, 2003). Selecting students for an enrichment project based on observed traits can therefore only imply that you are able to include students (you can state that they might be gifted), but formally you cannot exclude them (you can't state that they are not gifted).

The third trap when selection criteria for an AEA is set up, is to let the scores of an intelligence test determine whether a student can join or not. Setting the threshold for participation from a point of an IQ score of 130 is just as arbitrary as setting a threshold that the student

should at least score 100% three times consecutively in Maths. Knowing that a student has an IQ of at least 130 or knowing that the student is able to achieve high grades does not mean that you automatically understand how to adjust the curriculum. An IQ score and high achievements do not make educational needs comprehensible because educational needs are broader than just the curriculum and they also exceed IQ. Educational needs are about interpersonal, intrapersonal, cognitive and academic needs and all of this is intertwined with the need for self-actualization (Houkema, 2016).

The fourth trap is the result of the former three. Traditional teaching practice assumes all gifted students are the same and that they all have equal needs. The idea that gifted students are a homogeneous group that can be taught with one educational strategy is complete nonsense and also outdated (Matthews & Foster, 2006). That idea is as outrageous as the idea that everybody who has vision problems can be helped with identical spectacles. If they were given identical spectacles it would not mean that they all could see properly. An examination of the interactive models as developed by Gagné (2010), Sternberg (2002), Heller (2000) or a closer look at the perspective of the Columbus group (1994, as paraphrased in Kreger-Silverman, 2013) on giftedness, brings one to the conclusion that it is easy to argue that gifted students are a heterogeneous group.

Each student's developmental process is influenced by the specific chemistry between all the different (f)actors of that student's ecological system (van Meersbergen & Jeninga, 2012; van Gerven, 2015). Many wrong assumptions are made about the education of gifted children. It is assumed for example that all gifted children thrive on divergent problem solving assignments which they can undertake without teacher support. However, whether a student thrives on these assignments depends on what support he/she is given. That means that if you offer a student a more divergent kind of assignment, that student should be facilitated with the kind of support that fits his individual educational needs and capacities regarding the task. A

student who has difficulties prioritising the information given and has difficulties starting and ending a task needs more support on this point than a student who can easily prioritise. Offering a student an assignment without offering him the contextual safety of the teacher's educational support, is equivalent to ask a child to play outside on the motorway during rush hour. It engenders the feeling of loss and danger. If a student does not respond with enthusiasm to certain input, that does not mean he/she is not gifted; it may mean he requires something other than the teacher's preconceived notions of what is appropriate for the gifted.

The fifth trap is to assume that a pull out programme is automatically necessary for any gifted student (Janson, 2016). Selection procedures for participating in pull-out programmes starts with the student's ecological system. The interaction between the six (f)actors of this system (student, teacher, curriculum, learning environment, peers and family) determines the optimal way the student should be educated and how and where this curriculum can be best organised (van Gerven, 2014). The first step is to identify educational objectives to match the student who has been selected for an AEA. Those objectives can relate to content as well as to skills and exceed the basic academic domains. Thus social skills, executive skills, motor skills and intrapersonal skills can become legitimate relevant educational objectives if they activate the student's development in his zone of proximal development. The next step is to find out what assignments and materials are a fitting use in order to reach the set objectives. By doing so, a curriculum is selected that can be an optimal match for the student's needs. However, a curriculum like this calls on the teacher's capacity to organise this curriculum. Step number three is therefore to explore which didactical and managerial skills are required in order to put theory into practice regarding this student and this individualized curriculum. Only after these questions have been answered it can be determined what the best place is to realize this educational programme. That can differ for each student and each teacher, because what is feasible for teacher Z, is not automatically also feasible for teacher X. What is feasible depends

highly on the mix of students who are in her classroom, the educational needs of these students and the way responding to those needs calls on the teacher. Thus for gifted student A an AEA might be offered in the regular classroom, but for gifted student B who has different educational needs, the same teacher might suggest participation in a pull-out programme (van Gerven, 2014).

The final trap is the argument that once placed in a pull-out programme, means the need to participate in this programme will be there forever. I dare to contest the validity of this statement. This statement is only valid if you assume that giftedness is a static concept and education will be without consequences. Modern perspectives on giftedness consider a static conception of giftedness as an outdated perspective. (Matthews & Folsom, 2009; Sternberg 2009). Accepting the assumption that each student – and that includes gifted students – will develop as a result of good education, means accepting that a student's educational needs will differ from time to time (Hattie, 2013; van Meersbergen & De Vries, 2013). If you don't accept personal growth as a result of education, the efficacy of education would not be measurable. In that case development would be contributed to nature and that would diminish the role of the teacher. Differences in educational needs that are due to good education can become visible in all developmental domains. And that implies that the educational programming of AEAs should be subject to change whenever the set objectives are reached. I therefore suggest that we take on a more flexible perspective on the selection criteria for all our enrichment activities. The interaction of the student's ecological system with the needs of every individual student must be pivotal in this matter. If we are able to make that happen, then we are finally able to offer education that fits our students and we can stop searching for the students who match our narrowminded programming.

**Eleonoor van Gerven**, Drs., studied pedagogy at Nijmegen University (The Netherlands). She is managing director of Slim! Educatief, a private teacher education institute at post graduate level.

*She educates teachers in gifted education. Her teacher training courses (Specialist Gifted Education and Specialist Twice-Exceptionality) are accredited by the Dutch Society for Registered Higher Education. She has published (in Dutch) more than 15 books on gifted education. She has over 25 years of experience in teacher education. In 2014 she won a Mensa-award due to her contributions in the field of Dutch education.*

Contact: [info@slimeducatief.nl](mailto:info@slimeducatief.nl)

<sup>1</sup> Later in this text we'll describe all gifted programmes as Alternative Educational Arrangements (AEA) because this terminology keeps the option open to discuss also arrangements within the classroom with similar dilemma's regarding the selection of participants.

#### REFERENCES

- Borland, James.** (2005). Gifted Education Without Gifted Children: The Case for No Conceptions of Giftedness. In R. Sternberg, & J. Davidson, *Conceptions of Giftedness* (2 ed., pp. 1-19). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- De Bruin-De Boer, Alja & Kuipers, Jan.** (2011). SiDi-3. Drachten: Cedin.
- Drent, Sylvia & van Gerven, Eleonoor.** (2012). Passend onderwijs voor begaafde leerlingen. Assen: Koninklijke van Gorcum.
- Eyre, Deborah.** (2007). Structured tinkering: Improving provision for the gifted in ordinary schools. *Gifted & Talented International*, 4(1), 31-38.
- Gagné, Françoys.** (2010). Building gifts into talents: Brief overview of the DMGT 2.0. Montreal: Université du Québec à Montréal.
- Guyt, Bram.** (2003). De dialoog als begeleidingsvorm. In E. van Gerven (Red.), *Attent op talent* (pp. 63-77). Utrecht: Lemma.
- Hattie, John.** (2013). Leren zichtbaar maken. Vlissingen: Bazalt Educatieve Uitgaven 2013.
- Houkema, Desirée.** (2016). Een psychologisch perspectief op de profielen van begaafde leerlingen. In Eleonoor van Gerven (Red.), *De Gids. Over begaafdheid in het basisonderwijs*. (pp. 75-88). Nieuwolda: Leuker.nu.
- Janson, Dolf.** (2009). Verrijkingsgroepen. In Eleonoor van Gerven (Red.), *Handboek Hoogbegaafdheid* (pp. 116-127). Assen: van Gorcum.
- Janson, Dolf.** (2016). Rijk onderwijs in de 21e eeuw. In Eleonoor van Gerven (Red.), *De Gids. Over begaafdheid in het basisonderwijs*. (pp. 157-170). Nieuwolda: Leuker.nu.
- Kreger-Silverman, Linda.** (2013). *Giftedness 101*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Kuipers, Jan.** (2016). Passend klassenmanagement voor excellente en (hoog)begaafde leerlingen. In Eleonoor van Gerven (Red.), *De Gids. Over begaafdheid in het basisonderwijs* (pp. 113-126). Nieuwolda: Leuker.nu.
- Leuker.nu.**
- Matthews, Donna & Folsom, Christy.** (2009). Making connections: cognition, emotion and a shifting paradigm. In T. Balchin, B. Hymer, & D. Matthews, *The Routledge International Companion to Gifted Education*. (pp. 18-25). London: Routledge.
- Matthews, Donna & Foster, Joanne.** (2006). *Being Smart about Gifted Education*. Scottsdale: Great Potential Press Inc.
- Mika, Elisabeth.** (2005). Giftedness, ADHD, and Overexcitabilities: The possibilities of Misinformation. *Roeper Review*, 28(4), 237-242.
- Sternberg, Robert.** (2002). Succescolle intelligentie. Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger.
- Sternberg, Robert.** (2009). Teaching for successful intelligence: principles, practices and outcomes. In Robert Sternberg, & Elena Grigorenko, *The essential Sternberg*. (pp. 183-194). New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Sternberg, Robert & Zhang, Li-fang.** (1995). What do we mean by Giftedness? A pentagonal implicit theory. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 39, 88-95.
- Subotnik, Rena, Olszewski-Kubilus, Paula & Worrel, Frank.** (2011). Rethinking Giftedness and Gifted Education: A Proposed Direction Forward Based on Psychological Science. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 12(1), 3-54.
- van Gerven, Eleonoor.** (2014). Knapzak Praktijkgidsen. Uitdagend Onderwijs. Nieuwolda: Leuker.nu.
- van Gerven, Eleonoor.** (2015). Knapzak Praktijkgidsen: De cirkel van zorg voor intern begeleiders. Nieuwolda: leuker.nu.
- van Gerven, Eleonoor.** (2016). Goed onderwijs voor begaafde leerlingen. Dordrecht: Instondo.
- van Gerven, Eleonoor.** (2016). Inclusie en het onderwijs aan begaafde leerlingen: twee geloven op één kussen? In E. van Gerven (Red.), *De Gids. Over begaafdheid in het basisonderwijs*. (pp. 19-36). Nieuwolda: Leuker.nu.
- van Gerven, Eleonoor & Drent, Sylvia.** (2004-2016). *Digitaal Handelingsprotocol Hoogbegaafdheid*. Assen: van Gorcum.
- van Gerven, Eleonoor & Hoogenberg, Ilja.** (2011). Begaafd begeleiden. Competentiematrix voor de Specialist Begaafdheid. Assen: Koninklijke van Gorcum.
- van Meersbergen, Erik & De Vries, Peter.** (2013). *Handelingsgericht werken in passend onderwijs*. Utrecht: Perspectief uitgevers.
- van Meersbergen, Erik & Jeninga, John.** (2012). De ecologie van de leerling. Een systeemgericht model voor het onderwijs. *Tijdschrift voor Orthopedagogiek*, 51, 175-185.
- Venderickx, Kathleen.** (2017). Wat we kunnen leren van het coachen van topsporters. Presentatie tijdens Dé Dag over begaafdheid in het basisonderwijs. Groningen: Slim! Educatief.
- Ziegler, Albert & Heller, Kurt.** (2000). *Conceptions of Giftedness from a Meta-Theoretical Perspective*. In K. Heller, F. Mönks, J. Sternberg, & R. Subotnik (Red.), *International Handbook of Giftedness* (pp. 3-20). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Ziegler, Albert, Stoeger, Heidrun., & Grassinger, Robert.** (2011). Actiotope model and self-regulated learning. *Psychological Test and Assessment Modelling*, 53(1), 161-179.

# Reports by National Correspondents of ECHA

## INTRODUCTION

### **ANNETTE HEINBOKEL, GERMANY**

*Editor of ECHA News*

Contact: [annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de](mailto:annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de)

In this issue of ECHA News you find the reports of six national correspondents: Canada, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Romania and Slovenia. One theme relevant in several countries – and that will probably increase in the coming years – is inclusion: Today it very often means that children with physical, mental, emotional or social problems are taught not only in one school but also in one classroom. The question how their special needs can satisfactorily be met without neglecting the other children in the class has not often been solved yet. The solution depends on many factors: the number of children in the class, how well teachers have been prepared for the task, additional support, the severity of the problems, ....

What people tend to forget: Inclusion in the true sense should mean that the needs of intellectually gifted children must also be met. The problem can be exacerbated by the fact these children can have problems, too. It is not sufficient that people are satisfied when bright children have achieved the minimum of what a school system requires of them.

To quote Linda K. Silverman: Mildly, moderately, highly and extraordinarily gifted children are as different from each other as mildly, moderately, severely and profoundly retarded children are from each other, but the differences among levels of giftedness are rarely recognized.

## CANADA



### **KARIN TISCHLER**

Contact: [ktischler10@gmail.com](mailto:ktischler10@gmail.com)

After the initial overview report of the gifted Canadian landscape in the Fall 2017 ECHA Newsletter, this current update shares local and international news with Canadian participation.

#### **Local events around Vancouver:**

GCABC, the provincial Gifted Children's Association of British Columbia in conjunction with the Lower Mainland Gifted Contacts Group has done a great job organising a 3-day conference, Power Up Potential 2018, on April 5th-7th across Greater Vancouver, featuring as the keynote speaker, gifted expert James Webb, American author, psychologist and founder of SENG. Jim's keynotes will include topics such as misdiagnoses, underachievement as well as social and emotional needs of gifted children. Other breakout sessions by local speakers will cover a variety of topics from advocacy, individual learning plans (IEPs) to homeschooling as an educational option for gifted children.<sup>1</sup>

As part of her annual local community engagement, world-renowned psychologist, author, movie producer and founder of the Daimon Institute for the Highly Gifted, P. Susan (Sue) Jackson, held a pre-show potluck and screening of her documentary RISE in conjunction with the Surrey Parents Association of Gifted and Learning Disabled/ Gifted on January 24th 2018.

#### **Canadian involvement in the international gifted community:**

Sue Jackson went onto her second European Speaking Tour in September 2017 and delivered a very well-received two-day workshop in Utrecht, NL in conjunction with leKu<sup>2</sup>. In November 2017 Sue was the Canadian representative at the SENG Mini Conference in Los Angeles

where she spoke about anxiety. Sue is looking forward to attending the ECHA Conference 2018 in Dublin and meeting many of you.

Also, Sue Jackson will be dedicating 2018 to writing a series of books starting with "Excuse me, Where Do I Park My Whale? The Extraordinary Journey of the Exceptionally and Profoundly Gifted".

#### **References:**

If people would like to learn more about the Daimon Institute please sign up for regular news updates on the Daimon Institute website.<sup>3</sup>

GCABC has been producing many posts about everything gifted. Please feel free to check out their website.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Guest correspondents – Dr. Janneke Frank and Dr. Joanne Foster:**

I am delighted that we have two Canadian guest correspondents, recently retired principal of Westmount Charter School (Mid-High Campus) Dr. Janneke Frank and award-winning author Dr. Joanne Foster. Janneke and Joanne will share more about the Alberta and Ontario gifted community respectively.

#### **Gifted Education in Alberta JANNEKE FRANK**

Gifted education in Alberta, and in most Canadian provinces, is treated in the context of an inclusive education framework. One major school jurisdiction has established a GATE Program offered in several dual-track schools. The majority of students who are gifted throughout the province are served in regular classrooms that utilize a variety of instructional techniques and program provisions (grouping), including pull-out programs.

Alberta is the only province in Canada to permit the establishment of public charter schools. Each charter school has a particular programming mandate. Three of our 13 charter schools serve students

who are gifted in a congregated setting. All three schools enroll students with multiple exceptionailities. The three schools range in population from 130 students to 1250 students, one of which is a K – 12 school.

There are legislated provisions for home schooling options that include online learning. Various parent support groups have been established in several communities throughout the province.

#### **Gifted Update / Overview for Ontario, Canada**

**JOANNE FOSTER**

Across Canada, education is provincially mandated; that is, each of the provinces and territories has its own Ministry of Education, and each sets its own guidelines with respect to priorities, procedures, protocols, teacher accreditation, and curriculum development. Government elections can alter the educational landscape, resulting in both small and systemic changes.

*Educational practices vary from place to place, and our unique culture with its countless multicultural dimensions lends powerful and intriguing influences to curricular programming and learning opportunities from kindergarten through to secondary school and university.*

Within the province of Ontario, Gifted Education falls under the umbrella of Special Education. The Ministry of Education recognizes the right of all children to have access to programming that meets their individual needs, and endeavours to ensure that appropriate educational programs and services are available for students with one or more exceptionality. There are Ministry policy and resource guides accessible online<sup>5</sup> and also at<sup>6</sup> (where the mission statement is, "support every child, reach every student"). In Ontario, there are 72 school boards, 60 English and 12 French. Boards like to have some autonomy, and they are not equally resource-rich, so delivery models with respect to program provision in special education often differ from one school board to the next. There is a certain amount of navigating that families must do to ensure that the system works well for them, and that gifted learners obtain the resources and services they require.

*Gifted education in Canada is evolving in response to research-driven findings in order to meet the needs of exceptional learners. Learning options are flexibly targeted to special needs, and designed so as to include all students for whom they are appropriate. Enhanced understandings of individual developmental differences, adaptive instruction, support mechanisms, and a mastery orientation are starting points for optimal growth for gifted education within the broader Canadian educational milieu.*

Educational options for gifted learners in Ontario and across the nation come in many forms, and include differentiated instruction in regular classroom settings; alternative curriculum options designated by subject area; full-time congregated gifted classes; part-time gifted or enrichment classes; advanced placement programs; extracurricular learning experiences; distance and online courses; and mentorships. Teacher training and professional development in gifted education is not particularly robust in Ontario, and it would be beneficial for parents and educators to advocate for more and targeted pre-service, and in-service offerings.

*Educators are taught the value of differentiated instruction; they are encouraged to use above-level testing; and they recognize the importance of providing a wide range of learning opportunities that can be flexibly matched to students' requirements.*

Recently, there has been increased emphasis on ways to support and encourage children's emotional well-being, and this will surely have positive implications across the full special education spectrum<sup>7</sup>. There is also a push to better define giftedness, to crystallize identification and assessment processes, to enhance programming initiatives, and to strengthen home and school connectivity - and all of this, too, bodes well for gifted learners across Ontario, and beyond.

*Although the guiding principles that govern the practice of teaching may vary from province to province, or even from school to school, there is an overriding sense of the importance of a caring, supportive approach, and a vision for exemplary practice.*

#### **Author's Notes:**

The quotes in italics have been extracted from "Canada, Gifted Education" by Dr. Joanne Foster, Dr. Marion Porath, and Dr. Elizabeth Smyth, in the *Encyclopedia of Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent*. Sage Publications. 2009, 1:113-116. To find out more about Canadian guest correspondent Dr. Joanne Foster - and for additional articles, links, and gifted-related information – please go to [www.joannefoster.ca](http://www.joannefoster.ca)

<sup>1</sup> <http://poweruppotential.org>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ieku.nl/highly-gifted-uitzonderlijk-begaafd/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.daimoninstitute.com/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://giftedchildrenbc.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os-onschools\\_2017e.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os-onschools_2017e.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/promote\\_wellbeing.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/promote_wellbeing.html)

## CROATIA



**ŽELJKO RAČKI**

Contact: [zracki@foozos.hr](mailto:zracki@foozos.hr)

With great optimism and hope, we send the readership of the ECHA News greetings and news on gifted education from the Republic of Croatia.

This text is written from a correspondent's personal and subjective viewpoint and does not represent the formal national, formal institutional, or any other formal viewpoint.

In order to provide the ECHA community with the news on gifted education in the Republic of Croatia, three main lines of dialogue will be opened here. These lines include: 1) the current educational context in the Republic of Croatia, 2) the national investment in gifted education initiatives, and 3) the participation of the Republic of Croatia in the collective European trends in gifted education. These will be coupled with the announcement of the 1st Thematic ECHA Conference to be held for the first time in the Republic of Croatia, in the year 2019 in the beautiful city of Dubrovnik, a UNESCO World Heritage site on the Croatian Adriatic coast.

### 1) The current educational context in the Republic of Croatia

According to the Education and Training Monitor of the European Commission for the Republic of Croatia in 2016, and 2017, an annual publication that captures the evolution of education and training in the EU, some of the highlights that capture the essence of the gifted education in the Republic of Croatia relate to the fact that the proportion of top-performing students is below 5%, which may suggest a lack of focus on identifying and supporting talented students. This fact is embedded within the currently developing educational context under the strong influence of ongoing political disagreements. These have slowed down the implementation of the landmark Strategy for Education, Science and Technology and the associated curricular reform (i.e., including gifted education). At the same time, the Croatian e-Schools project (2014-2022) – a model for digitalizing schools on a national scale,

as a vital segment of the national curricular reform, is developing on schedule and stimulating the development of digital education content.

### 2) The investment in the national gifted education initiatives

On the bright side, all the gifted students are provided for by the national gifted education acts and explicit gifted education regulations covering pre-school, basic, secondary, and tertiary education. Scholarships for gifted students are available, as well as yearly prizes for student creativity and excellence in competitions. The Croatian municipalities and cities also provide for the gifted, either through the support of city-based gifted education initiatives (e.g., Centres of excellence), scholarships for gifted students, or organising municipality based programmes for gifted youth. Of importance to the general gifted education goals, the ECHA goals, and most importantly, to the interests of the citizens of the Republic of Croatia, in December 2016 the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia collected EU funds based national project proposals for the pre-tertiary gifted education for the time frame 2017-2019. Out of the submitted project proposals, the Ministry declared in May 2017 that 11 projects will be financed with the total amount of 1.3 million €. This so far is the single largest investment into gifted education programmes for gifted students in basic and secondary education in the Republic of Croatia since the year 1991. The importance of this initiative cannot be overstated. With the focus of the supported projects mostly placed on the STEM domains (i.e., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), these projects aim to support the above mentioned national curricular reform, and are planned to result in changes in the national education system of the Republic of Croatia to the benefit of all involved. Besides these extensive initiated projects that span two years, with numerous students and educators involved, the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education regularly, on a yearly basis, financially supports smaller year-long education initiatives of which some regularly cater to the needs of the gifted students (e.g., the extracurricular programmes offered in the basic and secondary education institutions,

for example, by the NGOs, etc.). On the tertiary level, universities plan for and innovate by including Gifted Education courses in pre-service teacher education. For those teachers already employed or working in education, the national Teacher Education and Training Agency (AZOO), throughout the school year regularly offers in-service teacher education opportunities free of charge, with giftedness and gifted education as the regular topic of discussion and education for many teachers and general educators. The AZOO serves as the national link to many other international in-service teacher education programmes offered at the European level. Currently, there are two ECHA Specialists in Gifted Education, educational psychologists, working in pre-school and institutions of higher education in the Republic of Croatia: Mrs. Jasna Cvetković Lay, Ph.D. candidate, and Mr. Željko Rački, Ph.D. They are involved in many of the national and international initiatives in giftedness research and education. By having two specialists in gifted education, 13 registered ETPs, and many not so declared yet inspiring initiatives in gifted education, we share in the collective European values of excellence and creativity.

### 3) The participation of the Republic of Croatia in the collective European trends in gifted education

The European collective awareness based on mutual trust is vividly present and evident in the Republic of Croatia in the form of public institutions and NGOs steadily joining and supporting the growing European Talent Support Network (ETSN) by registering as European Talent Points (ETP). At this point, there are 13 registered European Talent Points in the Republic of Croatia. A couple of ETPs exceeded their planned programme and will soon apply for the status of the first European Talent Centres in the Republic of Croatia. The ETPs so far were heavily involved in gifted education in previous decades, and continue to this day to stand for excellence in research and the gifted education in the Republic of Croatia. The ETPs in the Republic of Croatia include the following: 1) Faculty of Education, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Osijek, 2) Centre for Gifted Child Development "Bistrić", Zagreb, 3) Centre for gifted children, Rijeka, 4) Kindergarten

"Mediterranean Flower", Split, 5) Association "Wind at the back", Zagreb, 6) NGO Klikeraj, Osijek, 7) XV. Gymnasium, Zagreb, 8) The Science and Education Centre Višnjan, Višnjan, 9) Osnovna škola – Scuola elementare Rivarela, Novigrad – Cittanova: School of Applied Creativity „Novigradsko proljeće“, Novigrad, 10) Basic school "Petar Zoranić", Nin, 11) Centres of excellence of Varaždin County, Varaždin, 12) The Croatian Robotic Association, Zagreb, and 13) The International Artists-in-Residence Programme in Splitska, Island of Brač. Some other private praiseworthy education initiatives emerged as well (e.g., IRIM – Croatian Makers, etc.) that are supportive of the gifted and their development. A few details will be given here on activities of some of the ETPs.

At the pre-school level, for example, one of the registered ETPs, the Centre for Gifted Child Development "Bistrić", Zagreb, and led by our most distinguished ECHA Specialist in Gifted Education, Mrs. Jasna Cvetković Lay, provides permanent in-service education on giftedness and gifted education by running a programme licenced by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia for educators working in more than 60 Croatian cities. Some other examples include the NGO "Wind at your back" founded in 2012 that developed an enrichment programme "Sparks" for the gifted children aged 4 to 14. Their main goal is to create a place where gifted children can work with peers that share their interests and abilities, where they can learn at their speed, feel supported, safe and be themselves, develop their potential and overcome their weaknesses. They organise workshops for approximately 130 children, with interesting activities that are developing scientific, critical, creative, divergent ways of thinking and problem solving, emotional intelligence and learning skills. Recently they started organising and giving seminars for teachers and parents.

At the primary or basic school level, one of the registered ETPs, the Klikeraj (eng. game of marbles), is an NGO from Osijek founded in 2014 (ETP since 2016). Their team of psychologists and educators is gathered around the idea of creating an enriched environment for children's cognitive development. The Klikeraj's main activities are development and production

of didactic materials and toys for fostering cognitive processes, education based on various topics concerning psychology of creativity and gifted education (for pre-school and elementary educators), development of enriched extra-curricular programmes for children, research and publications, project management in institutional and extra-institutional education, and education counselling (for educators and parents).

At the level of secondary education, for example, the XV. Gymnasium (ETP) in the Croatian capital city of Zagreb, provides the gifted with a programme designed to successfully combine the cognitive, emotional and social aspect of each student, as well as to choose the most capable and motivated students to take part in project assignments that are a welcome addition to the regular programmes. A continuous communication between the students, parents, mentors and other school-based Gifted Students' Team members aims at developing more flexible project assignments adjusted to their students' needs. Identification is offered to first grade students but is not obligatory. The projects are done in the field of natural sciences and mathematics in the second and third grade. Students individually, or with the help of their mentors, decide on the field of interest as well as their project assignments. Students take part in numerous national and international conferences and science fairs.

Other types of national gifted education initiatives include, for example, the first Croatian training on the application and scoring of the EPoC test for the evaluation of potential creativity, that took place during January 2018 in city of Rijeka. Training was delivered by Professor Taisir Subhi Jamin, an expert in gifted education who was responsible for the proliferation of this test in several languages and countries. It initiated considerable interest among education specialists, so an additional training event is planned in cooperation with the author of EPoC test, Professor Todd Lubart. This will take place in Croatia, in Istrian County, in the town of Novigrad, famous for the Novigrad Spring School of Creativity (ETP). Training will be organised April 10th - 12th, at the same time when several hundred elementary school students gifted in arts, will gather to work

in numerous workshops in this popular spring school for the gifted. You can find more information on the EPoC training (in the Croatian language) at the web page of the main organiser of the event, the Istrian association of psychologists (<http://dpi.hr>).

All Croatian ETPs are invited to take part in the 1st ADA Symposium on excellence in education during the ICIE 2018 conference in Paris. The 1st Alps-Danube-Adria Symposium on Excellence in Education will take place in Paris (July 3-6, 2018), during the 16th ICIE conference on Excellence, Innovation, & Creativity in Basic-Higher Education. This regional symposium aims at providing experts with a forum for sharing knowledge and presentation of their current research and best practice examples. Another important goal is networking of international experts and addressing contemporary trends and issues in the broad field of education. To facilitate the international and regional exchange of ideas and information, this symposium has a specific approach of accommodating two sections. The ADA English Language Section will focus on broader professional, organisational and social issues of excellence in education while the ADA Regional Languages Section (including, but not limited to the Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian languages) will focus on regional aspects of the same topics with special focus on creativity, innovations, and centres of excellence in education. Development of regional editions of the EPoC test of potential creativity from the perspective of policymakers, local municipal and regional authorities, centres of excellence and schools will be presented, allowing for further support and networking opportunities. Everybody interested in participating can contact the coordinator of the ADA symposium Darko Lončarić ([dloncaric@uniri.hr](mailto:dloncaric@uniri.hr)). You can find more information on the ICIE conference web site (<http://www.icieconference.net>).

>>> next page

**In support of the international gifted education initiatives: Announcement of the 1st Thematic ECHA Conference in 2019 in Dubrovnik**



And finally, the best possible way to introduce the role that ECHA has taken in contemporary gifted education and education of educators in the Republic of Croatia is to have the Faculty of Education (ETP) as the organiser of the first ECHA conference in Croatia. This conference announcement, given in this issue of ECHA News, calls for researchers and educators, both national and international, to engage in intensive in-depth empirically based discussion on creativity and innovation and how they relate to giftedness theory and education. The local organiser of the conference is the Faculty of Education in Osijek, offering this conference as the registered European Talent Point in the

European Talent Support Network. The 1st Thematic ECHA Conference entitled Creativity Research & Innovation in Gifted Education: Social, Individual, and Educational Perspective will be held from 16th to 18th October 2019, in the beautiful historic city of Dubrovnik, the UNESCO World Heritage Site, on the Croatian Adriatic coast. The central focus of this conference is the relevance of creativity study approaches for giftedness theory, research, and everyday practice in gifted education. The specific theme of the conference is creativity. Scientific studies of creativity, their relationship with innovation, and with the established field of giftedness studies, are of crucial importance to gifted education and talent support due to the explicitly stated national and international educational objectives specifying creativity as the 21st-century skill to be fully developed. This conference aims at providing valuable thematically focused research insights on creativity as the most important topic in the education of the gifted. We are delighted to have as keynote speakers these distinguished scholars: Vlad Glăveanu, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Psychology and Professional Counseling at Webster University Geneva, Switzerland, Zorana Ivčević, Ph.D. a Research Scientist at

the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, and Jonathan Plucker, Ph.D., the Julian C. Stanley Endowed Professor of Talent Development at Johns Hopkins University, where he works in the Center for Talented Youth and School of Education. Three connected conference sub-themes will cover the broad social, individual, and the educational perspective of creativity in order to provide insight and promote research and best practice based innovations in gifted education.

We will do our best to welcome all the ECHA community members and the worldwide colleagues in person at this scientific conference in 2019 in Dubrovnik, Croatia (<http://echathematic2019.foozos.hr>), where we will share our study findings and practical know-how on gifted education.



## Gifted Education Quote

*Acceleration is one of the most curious phenomena in the field of education. I can think of no other issue in which there is such a gulf between what research has revealed and what practitioners believe. The research on acceleration is so uniformly positive, the benefits of appropriate acceleration so unequivocal, that it is difficult to see how an educator can oppose it.*

**Dr. James Borland**, Teachers College, Columbia University: *Planning and Implementing Programs for the Gifted*, 1989  
quoted in A Nation Deceived, 2004.

**FINLAND****RISTO HOTULAINEN**Contact: [risto.hotulainen@helsinki.fi](mailto:risto.hotulainen@helsinki.fi)

In Finland, a move towards more individualized values of learning was noted when the earlier "National Core Curriculum in Basic Education 2004" was published (Ref. FNBE, 2004). There was a notion that the individual student is entitled to teaching which corresponds to his or her personal abilities, special needs and the development of such abilities (Ref. FNBE, 2004). The new national core curriculum for basic education, implemented in autumn 2016 (Ref. FNBE, 2016), introduced new competencies and new ways of assessment that guide and promote learning. The resulting transversal competences are: 1) thinking and learning-to-learn; 2) looking after oneself, managing daily activities, safety; 3) cultural competence, interaction and expression; 4) multi-literacy, understood as the ability to produce and interpret a variety of different texts; 5) information and communication technology (ICT) competence, working life competence and entrepreneurship, and 6) involvement and building a sustainable future.

The earliest forms of some of these competencies were formulated already in the 90's as part of the National Evaluation Framework for Education (Ref. FNBE, 1999). From the earlier curriculum the position of students' individual needs has been further strengthened and differentiation has been underlined as the pedagogical basis of teaching. Thus, all students, including those who are more able, should be given an education that addresses their individual needs.

It is well known that assessment guides learning towards learning objectives. For this reason, new assessments need to be matched carefully to the above mentioned competencies to enhance expected learning. Accordingly, new modes of assessment are expected to help and strengthen individualized learning. For example, according to the Finnish new core curriculum the abovementioned competencies need to be integrated and assessed as parts of school subjects. Teachers are expected to

familiarize themselves with the curriculum and construct assessment protocols accordingly for these competencies. Furthermore, there is greater emphasis on self- and peer assessment.

However, the curriculum framework does not provide concrete means for actualizing the assessment. The impact seems to have both negative and positive consequences. The negative one is that new ways of assessment and their initialization build anxiety among teachers but the positive one is that the created need for formative, self- and peer-assessment and assessment of transversal competencies has created a market for new educational businesses. In Finland, new educational start-ups have entered the educational field providing digitalized solutions that aim at easing teachers' work and helping students to follow their learning progress. Until now, new modes of assessments and applications have entered almost all Finnish schools. This has resulted in an unexpected change in the assessment culture that may gradually change the learning culture as well.

As educators and researchers, we are now in a new position to understand how technological advances shape learning. For example, many Finnish publishing houses are providing digitized and dynamic learning materials for teachers and students that allow the distribution of the learning tasks (lower order thinking skills, higher order thinking skills and applied activities) suitable for the learners' learning level. Different students can work on the same task at different thinking levels and assess thinking and learning-to-learn skills. By new technologies and ways of assessment, students can be encouraged to develop acquiring knowledge and strategic processing, and to strengthen their own interest. In school, students can respond to the particular interest of students, for example by creating links with those who are excited about the same things from other schools as well as non-school specialists.

There seem to be potentially good intentions and hope at work when new competencies and new ways of assessment were added to the curriculum. At best new assessments can accelerate individualized acquisition of competencies if they guide

the actions of teachers and students to monitor their progress. However, without clearly guiding and supporting how to assess such new learning areas the efforts may well do harm instead of good. And without research, it is hard to say how these applications shape learning, its direction and who are the ones benefitting from these changes. Until now, many of the positive results about the use of digital devices in assessment and learning were gained by a qualitative approach with relatively low sample sizes while clear evidence of a lasting impact on both learning achievement and motivational changes is for the most part still missing. For this reason, there is a growing need for more research on longitudinal studies related to digitalized assessment and learning with large sample sizes including high performing sub-groups to study schools as the context of pedagogical change.

**REFERENCES**

- National Board of Education.** (1999). A framework for evaluating educational outcomes in Finland. National Board of Education, Evaluation 8/1999.  
<http://www.oph.fi/english/publications>  
 Retrieved 5th Mar 2018.
- National Board of Education.** (2004). National Core Curriculum for basic education 2004.  
[http://www.oph.fi/english/curricula\\_and\\_qualifications/basic\\_education/curricula\\_2004](http://www.oph.fi/english/curricula_and_qualifications/basic_education/curricula_2004).  
 Retrieved 5th Mar 2018.
- National Board of Education.** (2016). Curriculum reform 2016. Renewal of the core curriculum for the pre-primary and basic education.  
[https://verkkokauppa.oph.fi/epages/OPH.sf/en\\_GB/?Locale=en\\_GB](https://verkkokauppa.oph.fi/epages/OPH.sf/en_GB/?Locale=en_GB)  
 Retrieved 5 Mar 2018.



## GERMANY

**ANNETTE HEINBOKEL**

Contact: [annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de](mailto:annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de)

As reported in previous editions of ECHA News, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF) and the Federal States started a huge project in gifted education. Starting in January 2018, in the coming ten years 125 mill. Euros will be spent. Approximately half of the money will go to research, the other half will be spent on projects in 300 schools.

Having followed the development of gifted education world wide since the late 1970s, I find that not much has really changed. There are basically two different forms of educating the gifted: enrichment and acceleration (Hattie 2009 / 2012). Of course there are very different forms of enrichment and acceleration, and there are combinations of both. Some work better than others, some are easier to implement in everyday school life, some cost little or no money, others are expensive. What did change over the decades: Today more and more states / school districts / schools / individual teachers make offers for intellectually gifted children. Many people have become aware that gifted children do not succeed automatically,

their achievements are often not the result of overzealous parents. Lack of satisfaction in learning can mean much personal suffering, quite apart from the loss to society.

There will be no research into acceleration, as stated in a letter from the BMBF. The researchers will have "all the classical forms of the promotion of the gifted in view. The projects of the scientists will take into account individual as well as curricular acceleration in the framework of the module 1 of the initiative (development of schools and the concept). As the method has already been extensively researched, it will not explicitly be part of the study of the initiative." (letter dating 15th March 2018)

This will probably mean that those states that up to now never collected any data on grade skipping or only for some types of schools will continue not collecting them. These states will not be able to say when and why acceleration is successful or where the pitfalls may be.

One thing will be very different, though. Germany, as well as many other states, has adopted the system of 'inclusion', meaning that children with physical, intellectual, emotional handicaps will not attend specials classes or even special schools anymore. They will be educated in the same schools and classes as everybody else. That means that teachers are required

to provide learning opportunities in one classroom for groups of children that can be extremely diverse, from the mentally handicapped to the highly gifted. It is not clear yet how much financial and personal support will be necessary or be available so that all the children in one class with their different abilities and needs get the best education possible. That obviously depends on how diverse the children in one class actually are. There is one voice, so far a rather lonely one, that claims it is possible to achieve that for gifted children without leaving their classrooms, enrichment in the form of a pull-out project and acceleration are both declared to be obsolete in this inclusive system.

It will be interesting to watch whether after five or ten years we'll find that basically the two known wheels of gifted education, enrichment und acceleration, will have been re-invented. There will be wheels of different sizes, differently decorated, but they will still be wheels.

## REFERENCES

- Hattie, John A.** (2009). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, Routledge, London & New York  
**Hattie, John A.** (2012). *Visible Learning for Teachers – Maximizing Impact on learning*, Routledge, London & New York

## IMPRINT

**Editor ECHA News**  
Annette Heinbokel

**Publisher**  
ECHA News is published by  
the European Council for High  
Ability

**Layout**  
Dicks Werbeagentur  
49080 Osnabrück · Germany  
[info@dicks-werbeagentur.de](mailto:info@dicks-werbeagentur.de)

**Copy ECHA News**  
Please send contributions to:  
Annette Heinbokel  
Bismarckstr. 100  
28203 Bremen Germany  
Phone: +49 421 69675131  
[annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de](mailto:annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de)

**ECHA members also receive:**  
HIGH ABILITY STUDIES  
The Journal of the European  
Council for High Ability  
Editor-in-Chief Heidrun Stoeger  
[heidrun.stoeger@ur.de](mailto:heidrun.stoeger@ur.de)

**Published by:**  
Carfax Publishing,  
Taylor & Francis Ltd.  
Customer Services Department  
Rankine Road  
Basingstoke, Hants RG24 8PR,  
UK  
[www.carfax.co.uk/has-ad.htm](http://www.carfax.co.uk/has-ad.htm)

**ROMANIA****CARMEN MIHAELA CRETU**Contact: [rocar@uaic.ro](mailto:rocar@uaic.ro)**RoTalent Conference**

RO Talent Association for talented people (European Talent Point) and the B.P. Hasdeu School of Iași organised the National Conference on Educational Strategies for nurturing talented children, 1st March, 2018, at the theatre Ateneum of Tatarasi, Iasi ([www.rotalent.org](http://www.rotalent.org)). The audience included teachers, school principals, representatives of educational district authorities, psychologists and parents. The one day conference programme included a plenary session and three workshops.

Two researchers from the Iasi and Suceava Universities and an experienced school councillor from the Craiova Educational Centre (CJRAE) were the keynote speakers. They addressed interesting issues on the current challenges of gifted education, the teacher training programmes on giftedness developed in Romania and the current research outcomes on gifted children and their parents' counselling. The workshops were organised by RoTalent experts in the field of gifted children identification, differentiated curriculum and specific

counselling strategies. The conference proceedings will be published at the end of May.

**Honours Club at University of Iasi, Romania**

The IQ Club represents an honours non-formal programme developed at the oldest university of Romania, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi (UAIC). Highly able students from different high schools of Iasi city and from the 15 departments of the UAIC have the opportunity to join this honours club, as a community of innovative learning and creative experience.

At the very beginning of this honours club it was the vision to create a place for high school students awarded with national and international prizes in different academic competitions. This idea obtained strong support from the local community after a TV debate where eight international Olympiads student winners were invited. During this debate, the students confessed their disappointment regarding the lack of chances to be together again after the end of the competition, to share their thinking, hopes and qualms, in a supporting and challenging environment. As a reaction to this debate, a group of university teachers and multinational companies'

representatives organised a non-formal education programme, like a club, in order to meet the students' emotional and intellectual needs. This programme has been developed since 2012, at the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi and involves more than 50 workshops and training on topics like storytelling, creativity, time management, volunteering, study fellowships, career development; three summer camps focusing on self-knowledge, team-building and leadership; early admittance to university courses and seminars, mentoring on academic development, and research probation. Several students from the beginning of the IQ Club life are currently successfully enrolled in different university departments. The university intends to develop this first IQ Club into the first Honours Programme in the country.

**Gifted Parenting Book translated into Romanian**

The popular book *Unser Kind ist hochbegabt* by Franz J. Mönks and Irene H. Ypenburg was recently translated into Romanian at the Polirom publishing house (*Copilul nostru este supradotat: ghid pentru părinți*, 2017, ISBN : 978-973-46-6864-9). It is the Romanian version of the book's 5th edition (2012) by Ernst Reinhardt Verlag

**Gifted Education Quote**

*What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child.*      **George Bernard Shaw**

*I asked Mom if I was a gifted child. She said they certainly wouldn't have PAID for me.*      **Calvin (Calvin & Hobbes)**

## SLOVENIA



### MARUŠKA ŽELJEZNOV SENIČAR

Contact: [maruska.zeljeknov@mib.si](mailto:maruska.zeljeknov@mib.si)

#### ECHA Slovenia made progress in the promotion of talented and gifted education on the national and international level.

MIB (the international educational centre) in cooperation with the Faculty of Education of the University of Primorska organised the III. international conference titled 'Talent Education', which was held in Porotorož between 26.-28. October 2017. 290 participants from 27 countries and 20 universities participated in this three-day event. The main focus of the

conference was the education of gifted and talented children and youth. A book of papers and abstracts with the content of the conference was published, which is available on the website: [www.talentededucation.si](http://www.talentededucation.si). The event generated a lot of new projects and international cooperation. One of the results was the founding of the International Talent Educational Institute (ITEI), whose vision is to be a "whisperer" for talented and gifted education.

Slovenia is also a partner in an international (Slovenia, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic) project called Talent Education. The main focus of the project is how to prevent underachievement of gifted children and youth. In the project we developed practical strategies for meta-

cognitive skills, design thinking, practical differentiation, a model for the identification of the educational needs of gifted and talented young children (4-7 years) and a pilot project for a chain approach of talent education at the city level (the connection of different organisations at the city level who support talented and gifted education). All the results will be available on the website: [www.talentededucation.eu](http://www.talentededucation.eu) The project's closing conference will be on 6th of June 2018 in Leiden. Members of ITEI and some decision makers from Slovenia (20 people) will attend this conference and exchange good practices and experiences in talented and gifted education. Members of ITEI will also join 16th ECHA conference 2018 in Dublin.



## Enriched Sleeping: Dream or Reality?



**WOUTER SEGERS, THE NETHERLANDS**

Practical research into the influence of a pull-out programme on the sleep quality of gifted children

In this study, the relationship between sleep quality of gifted children and potential influence factors was investigated. The influence factors examined consisted of cognitive and emotional aspects and two types of education. The 36 participants (aged seven to eleven) took part in a pull-out programme for one day a week, next to four days of regular school. Each night, they recorded their degree of reflection

and fear in a sleep journal during a period of two weeks. Additionally, their degree of fear of failure was determined with a Dutch questionnaire, PMT-K-2. Their sleep quality, their degree of fear and their degree of reflection were the same on days around the pull-out programme and regular school (Wilcoxon Test). Furthermore, no relationship was found separately around the pull-out programme or regular school between sleep quality on the one hand and the degree of fear, or fear of failure on the other hand. However, a moderate relationship (Spearman's rho, rs = -.533) was found between sleep quality and reflection around regular education, meaning that more reflection is associated with a lower

sleep quality of gifted children. The latter relationship was not found around the pull-out programme. As far as is known, this is the first study in which sleep journals are used to investigate factors that might affect the sleep of gifted children. In this article, the outcomes, value and practical implications of the research are discussed critically.

**Wouter Segers** is an enrichment teacher / coordinator at two primary schools (Stichting Openluchtscholen) and enrichment teacher in a pull-out programme (Day a Week School) in Amsterdam

Contact: [segers.wouter@gmail.com](mailto:segers.wouter@gmail.com)

## Curriculum Design for Home-schooling Highly Gifted Children



**CAROLINE BEIJERS, THE NETHERLANDS**

A literature study with regard to the criteria for curriculum design for homeschooling highly gifted children

This study focused on design criteria for curricula, used in homeschooling highly gifted children up to the age of 13. In order to provide an insight in these criteria, an international literature study was done. Keywords that have been used are: homeschooling / home education, gifted / talented / highly able and curriculum / programme. This study has led to several

conclusions. For designing an appropriate curriculum, it is important to take the individual educational needs as a starting point. In order to determine these needs, those responsible can use evidence-based tools. After determining the needs, they have to choose between structured homeschooling and unschooling. In order to make a thorough decision it is important to decide which goals the adults have in mind. The research community reached a consensus about five principles according to curriculum design for highly gifted children. Furthermore, consideration of social emotional and asynchronous development is very important.

**Caroline Beijers** is Master of Education and ECHA Specialist in Gifted Education. Her office, Nationale Plusklas, is a European Talent Point. Caroline is a counsellor for (parents of) highly gifted children and designs curricula for highly gifted children in primary school in an exclusive setting.

Contact: [caroline@nationaleplusklas.nl](mailto:caroline@nationaleplusklas.nl)

# The internal counselor as a pivot in the care of gifted children.

JULIETTE GOEMANS, THE NETHERLANDS

Literature research has shown that there are few studies that deal with the organisation of suitable educational programmes for gifted children within the basic support provided by internal counsellors.

This study focused on the following question: "What care and supervision can an internal counsellor offer to gifted children of a primary school within the framework of basic support?"

In order to answer the research question, 39 internal counsellors filled in a questionnaire and five educational administrators were interviewed.

In everyday school life, the internal counsellor implements supervision through a personal approach, compacting and enriching, letting pupils participate in pull out programmes and/or allowing pupils to accelerate. She is the pivot in the guidance of gifted children between the pupil, the teacher, the parents and external parties. This study shows that there is not always enough time and knowledge available for the practical implementation of supervision. Points for improvement are increasing knowledge and skills, early identification and expansion of counseling capacity or budget.

Follow-up research among a larger group of internal counsellors would give a better

view of how the support is arranged nationally. In addition, research is needed on the effects of upbringing, environment and culture of the pupils on the role of the internal counsellor in supporting and monitoring gifted children.

**Juliette Goemans** worked for several years as a teacher and then as a remedial teacher. She now works as an internal counsellor, and she is also a member of the management team of the primary school.

Contact: [harbourview232@hotmail.com](mailto:harbourview232@hotmail.com)

# Gifted students with autism in Dutch schools

MAAIKE KORTE, THE NETHERLANDS

*A qualitative study into the educational needs of gifted students with autism and the ways in which Dutch primary schools are trying to anticipate on these needs*

Passend Onderwijs demands that schools anticipate the educational needs of individual students, but sometimes these needs are complex or even contrary. This research shows insight into the educational needs of gifted students with autism and the ways in which different schools anticipate these needs. The results

show that the policy and the educational programme of a school are determined by the available expertise within a school. Even more, the educational need that strikes the eye determines in which school a gifted student with autism will be placed. More expertise and a fitting policy are required to improve the current situation.

**Maaike Korte** is an educational designer and a teacher in Special Education with a great interest in children with special needs. As an ECHA-specialist she's currently involved in the development of an expertise centre for gifted children in the central part of the Netherlands.

Contact: [m.korte@stichtingproo.nl](mailto:m.korte@stichtingproo.nl)

<sup>1</sup> Passend Onderwijs is a policy of the Dutch government. The aim of this policy is to put every student in a primary or secondary school that fits her / his talents and potential. This also applies to students in need of extra care (More information can be found on: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/passend-onderwijs>).

# German Association for the Gifted Child (DGhK), Bavarian Regional Branch

**MARTIN WADEPOHL, GERMANY**

Our vision is a society that acknowledges and values gifted children. Since 1978, the German Association for the Gifted Child (DGhK), a nationwide non-profit association with 15 independent regional branches, promotes the needs of gifted children by working with parents, teachers, psychologists and other interested persons.

In the DGhK Bavarian Regional Branch, nearly 40 counselors work on an honorary basis, some of them qualified as „ECHA-Coaches“. More than 400 families are members in the Bavarian branch and our newsletter containing information about our activities, news from other organisations for gifted children, educational policy, and other interesting topics reaches more than 1,000 non-members all over the state of Bavaria.

At present the DGhK Bavarian branch provides local discussion groups for parents of gifted children in 18 cities in

Bavaria. In addition, we organise lectures by professionals working in the field of giftedness, seminars, family weekends, and more.

However, our focus is on the gifted children. Our workshops cover several topics like 3D-printing, computer programming, photography courses, artworks from scrap metal, visits and guided tours at museums and institutions as well as training in debating.

At several locations we have monthly meetings to play board games where gifted children came together to play. The interest in these meetings is increasing and several new groups were initiated during the last year.

The holiday and weekend camps organised by the DGhK are most popular and always fully booked. Gifted children learn on those occasions that others have similar interests and ways of thinking. The parents can share information and experiences and have the opportunity of discussions with our trained counselors.

For teachers in kindergarten and schools we provide professional counselling and in-service training.

The Bavarian branch of the DGhK is part of a strong nationwide network. As European Talent Point, we offer to share information and best practices based on our experience in the field of giftedness, we have accumulated over many years.

**Martin Wadepohl** is president of the Bavarian branch of the German Association for the Gifted Child. The management team is completed by vice-president, Markus Burgmair, treasurer Peter Essewanger, and secretary Sonja Kaesen.

Contact: [vorstand@dghk-bayern.de](mailto:vorstand@dghk-bayern.de)  
<http://www.dghk.de/regionalvereine/bayern/ueber-uns>

## Māori girl playing chess

**GRAEME MILLER, NEW ZEALAND**

It was interesting to read about Saskia's remarkable achievements in chess in ECHA News 31, 2017. When I was principal at Kihikihi School, in a low socio-economic area, there was a 10-year-old Māori girl who picked up chess skills with remarkable speed. I used to run a chess club at school during lunch breaks. She asked whether she could come along and watch and I

said, "Yes". For the next month that's all she did. She went home during the two-weeks July holiday break and then, on return to school, challenged the number 1 player for his place, and won. I said to her, "I didn't know you could play chess." She said, "My cousin and I have been playing on-line against people from around the world over the holidays." A month later she represented the school in the regional primary school championships winning two of her five games. Two months

after that she competed in the regional individual championships, beating two boys from an elite private school where the students are thoroughly and expertly coached in chess. One of the boys burst into tears when he lost. I think it was beyond his comprehension that a girl, let alone a Māori girl, could beat him. I don't know whether her interest in chess continued as both she and I left the school at the end of the year.

# High Ability (RITHA)

The key to gifted education is qualified teachers & counsellors

## What will you gain from the RITHA programme?

- Distinguish yourself with both **the RITHA certificate & the ECHA diploma;**
- **Experience & deeper insight** into identifying, educating and counselling gifted students;
- The **latest scientific knowledge** about giftedness;
- Be able to make a **valuable and consistent contribution** to improve education and counselling for all students;
- Be part of an **international network** of experts.



## Giftedness does not automatically lead to great achievements

Did you know that underachievement is a pervasive problem which results in a tremendous waste of human potential – even among the most talented students? Every student deserves an educational programme that caters to their exact needs. It is still often thought that intelligent children, teenagers and young adults will make it on their own. In spite of this, cognitive talent does not always automatically lead to great achievements.

Want to know more about the RITHA programme? Download our brochure!

*After completion you will receive both the RITHA certificate from RadboudCSW (Radboud University) and the European Advanced Diploma in Educating the Gifted (the ECHA diploma).*

## How can you influence policy in gifted education in your country?

At Radboud University, one of the top 30 Research Universities in Europe, we believe that well-trained professionals can make a valuable contribution to improved education for all students, including those who are most talented. Schools require expertise when it comes to using gifted education for identifying gifted students and for catering to their needs.

## We offer counsellors and teachers an unique post-academic training programme on high ability

In the RadboudCSW International High Ability Training Programme (RITHA), it is our mission to increase the knowledge and experience of those who identify, educate and counsel gifted students in primary, secondary and higher education all over the world. In accordance with the standards of the *European Council for High Ability* (ECHA) and in cooperation with the *Radboud University* and *University of Münster*, we offer a post-academic training programme for professionals (at either post-master or post-bachelor level), who are working in the education or mental health care sectors.

[www.ritha.world/brochure2018](http://www.ritha.world/brochure2018)

