CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR Gifted Children

Newsletter of the Conceptual Foundations Network of the National Association for Gifted Children

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Looking Towards the Sunshine

Welcome to the pre-convention issue of the Conceptual Foundations Network newsletter. I, for one, am relieved that this year the conference is taking place in a warmer state. Sometimes championing gifted education can be a lonely endeavor and it will be nice to be surrounded by the figurative warmness of a shared enterprise as well as the literal warm breezes of Tampa, Florida. Speaking of champions of gifted education, the network is pleased this year to be honoring Dr. Joseph Renzulli as part of our Legacy Series Project. This issue contains tributes to Dr. Renzulli and a reprint of an interview in which Renzulli discusses his passion for gifted education. I hope that you will attend the Legacy Series event on Saturday, November 1st!

I also invite you to attend the Opening Keynote scheduled to be given by Daniel Pink. Jason Helfer and Stephen Schroth have graciously provided a review of Pink's book, *A Whole New Mind* that you can find in the Reader's Corner of this issue. And to further assist you in your preparations for the conference (or to inspire you to attend next time!) this issue includes information about network meetings, events and sessions sponsored by the Conceptual Foundations Network.

Hope to see you in sunny Florida!

~ Erin Morris Miller, Editor

INDEX OF THIS ISSUE

A MESSAGE FROM THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS CHAIR

Abbey Block Cash

During 2007-2008, the Conceptual Foundations Network (CF) has accomplished much, and weathered many changes. Following are some of note, written in no particular order:

- The morphing of Divisions into Networks
- The implementation of new by-laws by which NAGC is governed
- A reduction of CF proposal slots from 14 to 11, and 11 poster slots to 9
- The acceptance of CF member Bob Schultz's proposal for a mini-keynote in Tampa "Social and Emotional Needs: The Experts Speak Out"
- Distribution of two excellent CF Newsletters under the direction of Erin Morris Miller
- Institution of the Legacy Series Project/ Portraits in Gifted Education: Videotaping and
- Interview of Annemarie Roeper in 2007, and Joseph Renzulli during the upcoming convention in Tampa (Distinguished Educator Awards provided)
- Publication of the general NAGC Newsletter with contributions from each Network
- Consistent, general elections of leadership positions in all Networks
- Appointment of Elizabeth A. Romey as CF Membership Chair
- CF membership numbers maintained in excess of 100 individuals
- Updated brochures created for CF Network

- Tragic passing of Michael Pyryt on January 15, longtime CF supporter and member
- Meeting of Networks in Bethesda in February 2008, to plan the Tampa Convention
- NAGC/Network's decision to plan Convention for 2009, entirely on line
- Formal introductions and support of CF presenters by membership in Tampa
- Election of Bob Schultz as Chair Elect of CF, beginning September 2009
- Establishment of Carol Tieso as Network Board Representative at NAGC meetings
- Call for Assistant Chair of CF for September 2009 – please consider

Many of our CF members continue to serve admirably in their distinguished careers (e.g., Don Ambrose continues as editor of the Roeper Review); others make temporary changes (Nora Cohen and Bob Schultz have completed their sabbaticals); while still others move along to face new challenges (congratulations Jim Delisle on your retirement from Kent State). Many members contribute to the field with notable articles, book chapters, and books, and almost everyone maintains a busy presentation and conference schedule. CF invites members to notify us of your accomplishments, and we will be happy to mention them in upcoming newsletters.

Finally, I depart from my usual newsletter agenda that exclusively focuses on NAGC and CF content, to mention a concern in our field. It is obvious that there has been a large reduction of gifted education services afforded to students and families through the schools; some of this is attributable to a weak economy and the caution to lower school taxes by cutting programs. Furthermore, funds are used for "No Child Left Behind" services, which often consist of teachers who work with students in and out of school for test and drill activities, not suitable for students with gifted abilities (and perhaps not best suited for underachieving students, either). In response, in my private consulting role, I've spent a considerable amount of time this year advocating for a gifted model that places parents in the center of the able student's pedagogy. Parents frequently find it too tedious and ineffective to argue and plead with school districts to create investigative committees to explore needed services, or to seek enrichment programs through the superintendent's office. Certainly, if there is a state mandate, parents do have specific rights, and can demand appropriate services within their state's definition. However, again, the effort can be significant and the results only minimally rewarding.

Instead, I have been advising parents to structure their own community and home schooling programs to augment any services provided by the schools during the regular day. Parents are encouraged to get in touch with others in their neighborhood whose children require gifted curriculum options, and to form groups with parents who work both inside and outside the home. The menu I present includes Internet and library programs, enriched weekend and evening classes, museum offerings, and theatre opportunities. Parents are encouraged to use their skills to form mentorships for children in the areas of their interests and strengths, along with book discussion groups, sewing and craft circles, and agricultural activities. I suggest shadowing experiences with experts, participation in civic projects, and involvement in local neighborhood concerns and issues. In general, parents can help to make available the activities that schools no longer can or will provide. As some of these options occur in the daytime, it is suggested that families do not overly concern themselves with school absences, as they are providing a more appropriate educational opportunity for their children (Note: a colleague has pointed out that this might be a useful threat to districts, as attendance is one of the requirements for NCLB!)

The importance of parent involvement and teaching in the development of talented children represents nothing new. Goertzel and Goertzel in their 1962 book *Cradles of Eminence,* point to the essential significance of maternal support and guidance, along with home schooling and paternal risk taking; these are identified as critical factors that contribute to eminence, as gifted children become adults. Today, this unprecedented degree of parental involvement becomes a necessity, as it provides a **foundation** for the development of children with gifts and talents. This may well become a trend, in an unstable economy, if schools continue to view enrichment programs as a luxury that is expendable. Parents can no longer give this educational option lip service, but must insure that it happens for their children **on a daily basis.**

I am not without compassion for families who may be unable to provide these enrichment alternatives for their children because of a lack of knowledge and awareness, or personal economic limitations. Concerned parent groups might try to advocate for "other" children in need of services, as well, by casting a broader net for inclusion in ad hoc, home enrichment programs.

Tributes to Dr. Joseph Renzulli Teacher, Mentor and Friend

A THREE-RING TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH S. RENZULLI

Del Siegle, Ph.D.
NAGC President

It is rare for someone to change the direction of a field. It is equally unique to have an opportunity to study with that individual and even more unique to be privileged to later be a colleague of that individual. Joseph Renzulli is such an individual, and I have been privileged to be a student, a colleague, and a friend of his. The term "talent development," which is commonplace in our field, exists because of Joe Renzulli and his Three Ring Conception of Giftedness: the interaction of above average ability, creativity, and task commitment.

When I think of Joe, three characteristics come to mind. First, he is one of the most creative individuals I know. He always has a new idea that he wants to investigate. Around the office, we cringe when he returns from trips or a vacation. From the time he leaves the office until he returns, his mind is percolating with new ideas to implement, books and articles to write, or research studies to conduct. Second, he has an uncanny sense of practicality. His "Joe Six-Pack" instinct allows him to understand how to transform theory into practice and how to make it work in educational settings. Finally, he is an entrepreneur. He enjoys a challenge. When his vision does not exist, he creates it or challenges the status quo to change.

For Renzulli, students' school experiences should be meaningful. The curriculum should not be isolated from students' lives and interests. Educators should pay attention to students' interests and learning styles. They should make learning as authentic as possible. In my own research on the underachievement of gifted students, I have come to understand how important meaningful experiences are to student achievement. Joseph Renzulli has known this for a longtime, and he has spent a lifetime helping me and the education community realize it and change the way schools educate young people.

AN "AVERAGE JOE" WHO IS ANYTHING BUT AVERAGE

Wayne N. Trembly
Enrichment Teacher
Mansfield Middle School
Connecticut

How does one sum up Joe Renzulli? If a person's physical stature matched his/her achievements Joe would be a human skyscraper. He changed the face of gifted education with his three ring model, which encouraged educators to see gifts in a much larger number of their students, was among the very first to show teachers how to differentiate instruction for all students through his Schoolwide Enrichment Model, and continues to be a force for positive change with his fascinating recent innovation, Renzulli Learning.

When I first met Joe (and his immensely talented wife, Sally Reis) in 2000, I had been a teacher for many years, and felt I was a pretty good teacher. Since I had just been hired as the enrichment teacher in the school where Joe and

Sally had done some of their early research, and where they continue to do research, I needed to know more about this man and his programs and ideas. As I worked in his Three Summers graduate program over the next three years I was given the tools to become a far, far better teacher. Not a single day goes by when I do not use the tools, programs and ideas I was given, the tools, programs and ideas that Joe and his associates created.

The culmination of Three Summers is a seminar led by Joe, which is where I really came to know him. During the seminar I grew to admire Joe as a man as much as I had always admired him as a forward looking, dynamic, creative leader in the field of gifted education. Joe seeks no adulation. He insists upon being called "Joe," and is as down to earth as his "city kid" upbringing would lead one to believe he would be. He is uncomfortable when those who do not know him treat him as a "star," and after only a few moments in his presence people realize that he is, and wishes to be, just your "average Joe," albeit an "average Joe" who is anything but average (just don't tell *him* that). Joe is pleasant, upbeat, always interesting, always thinking of new ideas. I have been extremely fortunate to know him, to learn under him, and in recent years, to occasionally do some work both with and for him.

As we walk through life a very few people help us to make major, positive changes, and make us both better at our work, and better as human beings; Joe has done all of the above for me, and I am more than proud to call him both a mentor and a friend. I am proud and happy to join NAGC in saluting him as he receives this great honor which he so richly deserves.

For more information on the programs described in these articles see: http://www.gifted.uconn.edu

A MENTOR'S MENTOR: DR. JOSEPH S. RENZULLI

Willard L. White, Ph.D., Coordinator
Gifted Education Program
School District of Palm Beach County, Florida

The training I received from Dr. Joseph Renzulli in the Enrichment Triad and Schoolwide Enrichment Model at the University of Connecticut prepared me well to serve as mentor for the top student in my 30-year career as teacher and administrator in the Birmingham, MI School District.

Rahul Kohli was recognized as a math prodigy in his elementary school. His principal contacted me to arrange for him to take an advanced math class in middle school during his fifth grade year, a proposal that was met with reluctance from both the middle school principal and math teachers. They did not think an elementary student would fit in with middle school students. After lengthy discussions with the math teachers, principal, and Rahul's parents, it was agreed that he would be placed in eighth grade math during his fifth grade. Not only did Rahul fit in with the eighth grade students in math class, he became very popular, also, when his test grades were consistently the highest in the class.

Upon Rahul's entering sixth grade in middle school, it was determined that a math class for his level was not available; therefore, I helped make arrangements for him to attend the high school for a first-hour math class each day and return to the middle school for the remainder of the day. A twenty-minute block of time existed between the high school and middle school schedules and Rahul agreed to pursue a Type III research project during this time. He indicated he would like to study the Pentagon Scandal; he had collected more than fifty articles from newspapers and magazines on this subject. I asked him to explain what he meant by "scandal." He told me there were hundreds of people at the Pentagon on their phones all day ordering things. When I asked what they were ordering, he explained that they ordered the

material to make planes, tanks, weapons and bombs. Further, he said, "They give the contracts to their friends back in their home state and nobody ever checks up on this."

Hearing such an unusual interest from a sixth grade student forced me to ask myself, what was the next best step in advising him to pursue this research? The following day, I asked Rahul if he would like to call the Pentagon. He beamed with excitement! I told him to write all the questions he would like to ask about how the Pentagon functions; this list would serve as his interview guide. The following day we reviewed his questions. "We have to agree on some ground rules," I explained. First, Rahul would not use the word "scandal"; second, I would not tell the Pentagon he was a student in sixth grade; and finally, he must get the exact spelling of the name and title of the person with whom he was speaking in order to write a follow-up letter of thanks on school letterhead. At this point he said he had never written a business letter but I assured him we would learn together.

After we had reviewed his questions, I called the Pentagon and the operator answered "Code number, please." I told him I was an educator from Michigan and one of my students would like to talk with someone about how the Pentagon operates. He told me there was a Public Relations Department for each branch of the military and asked to which branch the student would like to speak. Rahul said he would like to speak to someone from the Marines, whereupon I gave him the phone and he talked with the spokesman for forty minutes while taking extensive notes. During the next few weeks Rahul continued conversations with the public relations department for each branch of the military and filled a large notebook. After a few weeks, boxes of free literature from the Pentagon began to arrive at the school to the attention of Rahul Kohli. He kept a file of these documents which later became a part of his interest center that he ultimately displayed at the Public Library.

During the seventh grade, Rahul took the SAT with high school juniors and seniors and scored so high he was given a scholarship for a summer program at Ohio State University. He took the course, *Number Theory and Discrete Math.* and finished this college level math class first in a class of seventeen. When I received a copy of his transcript from Ohio State University, I went directly to the math teacher who had shown reluctance originally for a student to be advanced three grade levels. I asked her whether she had taken the class, *Number Theory and Discrete Math*. She said she waited until she was a senior in college because it was considered the most difficult course for math majors. I then showed her Rahul's transcript and watched her mouth drop.

One day during eighth grade, Rahul came to my office and asked if I knew "a guy named Stanley." He showed me three handwritten letters he had received from Dr. Julian Stanley, giving him advice on the math sequence and colleges he should consider. Not only did I explain to him who Dr. Stanley was but I sent journal articles written by Stanley for his parents to read, as well.

Rahul skipped ninth grade and was admitted on a full scholarship to Detroit Country Day School, the only school in the area that offered the International Baccalaureate Program. Finishing high school in three years, he was awarded a scholarship to the University of Michigan where he majored in biochemistry. After graduation he was awarded a scholarship to Harvard University.

During the winter break of 2003, Rahul and his parents came to my home in Jupiter, FL to invite me to attend his graduation at Harvard on June 10, 2004. I attended his commencement ceremony where he received a Ph.D. in Pharmacology in the morning and was bussed to the medical school in the afternoon to see him awarded an M.D. degree.

Providing an appropriate curriculum for gifted students is my passion, but the highest point of my teaching career was my humble role as mentor to Rahul. I experienced further pride and a sense of success when Rahul asked me to speak of our relationship at his wedding in September 2007.

Yes, I feel a sense of pride and accomplishment when relating my association

with Dr. Rahul Kohli, but I must here give credit for attaining this feeling of success to the outstanding mentorship of Joe and my knowledge of the Enrichment Triad Model and the Schoolwide Enrichment Model developed by him.

FROM THE ROMAN COLOSSEUM TO WATERGATE: JOSEPH RENZULLI'S INFLUENCE ON YOUNG LIVES IN MY CLASSROOM

Thomas P. Hébert, Ph.D.
Department of Educational Psychology
The University of Georgia

My journey in gifted education began in 1980. After three years of teaching in a small rural community in southeast Georgia, I phoned the Georgia Department of Education in Atlanta and spoke with the gifted education consultant. I asked for recommendations for degree programs throughout the country where I might pursue training in gifted education. After I explored the recommendations and read the work of leaders in the field at that time, I realized that I philosophically agreed with Dr. Joseph Renzulli's broadened conception of giftedness and decided to apply for admission to the University of Connecticut's master's degree program in gifted education. Upon completion of my master's degree, I taught gifted students in an enrichment program in Torrington, Connecticut, where I facilitated a K-6 resource room program for gifted students based on the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM). Later I spent three years as a teacher of the gifted, K-12 in the Department of Defense Dependents' Schools where I coordinated an SEM program for children of the military families stationed in Bad Kreuznach, Germany.

As an educator, I was blessed with opportunities to work with bright, highly creative and motivated young people who had passionate interests in a wide variety of topics. These interests led to the development of their individual Type III investigations. These investigations involve students who become interested in pursuing a self-selected area and are willing to dedicate the significant time necessary for advanced content acquisition and process training in which they assume the role of a first-hand inquirer. Though their work, students develop authentic products that are directed toward bringing about a desired impact on a specific audience.

During my first year teaching in an SEM program in Connecticut, I worked with John, a third grader who introduced himself to me as a creative writer and sports enthusiast. John's Type III product that year was an anthology of original mystery stories, which he published and distributed throughout the school district. As a fourth grader John pursued his passion for sports and researched the history of the Olympic games. Following months of difficult research and writing multiple drafts, John became a school celebrity when he provided his elementary school with a morning sports program over the school's public address system. Following the daily *Pledge of Allegiance*, teachers and students throughout the building were greeted with the soundtrack from *Chariots of Fire* followed by John sharing his historical research on the upcoming Summer Olympics in a broadcast he advertised as "Moments from Olympic History." The following year, John was selected for a prestigious position as sports reporter for the *East School Times*.

As a high school junior and senior, John served as a freelance sports reporter for the community's newspaper and had articles published with his by-line. As a senior, John landed a part-time job with a local cable television station where he wrote scripts, videotaped and planned a weekly high school television production that focused on local high school athletics. Today, John is employed as writer for a sports magazine in New York and has recently published his first book, which examined the life of a controversial professional baseball player.

When I worked with children in Bad Kreuznach, Germany, I enjoyed guiding Eric, a fourth grader, through his first Type III study on

the Roman Colosseum. Eric and his mother had traveled to Rome during the winter holidays and he returned to my classroom with a new fascination with the ancient architectural wonder. In May of that year, Eric's mother and I celebrated on the evening of the Type III Product Fair when children and community members gathered around Eric and enjoyed the board game he had designed and named *Colosseum Craze*. As they enjoyed playing the game, children learned the history and architectural design behind the colosseum. Recently, I was pleasantly surprised to hear from Eric's mother when she e-mailed me and reported that Eric had graduated from Texas A& M University with an engineering degree and was enjoying his career in his new field. As I read the e-mail message from Eric's mom, I could not help but smile as I thought back to Eric's thoughtful questions regarding the colosseum's design and construction.

Another student was Anne Marie. Her experiences with Type III research at East School in Torrington included a study of Japanese culture. In third grade she wrote a book of original poems and carried out a scientific investigation of rabbits. Her interest in animals remained strong in fourth grade when she investigated elephants as an endangered species and wrote a powerful editorial for a national children's magazine. By sixth grade, Anne Marie was fascinated by Watergate and produced an original dramatic presentation of the political scandal as seen through the eyes of a reporter, a housewife, and Richard Nixon. She competed nationally with her dramatic presentation in the National History Day competition and brought home an award.

As a middle school student Anne Marie became concerned about the environment and took on renewed interest in environmental studies. Following her high school graduation she went on to study environmental studies and public policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As a Morehead Scholar she was honored with a prestigious university award for her honors thesis in which she examined the context of the Rwandan genocide, highlighted structural and political causes of the massacres, and critiqued the democratization process in Rwanda. As part of her summer internships with the Morehead Scholars Program, she spent two summers in African countries conducting research analyzing the AIDS epidemic with regard to women and children. Her work focused on the links between poverty and susceptibility to AIDS and other infectious diseases. The young girl who worried about endangered species remained concerned about global and environmental issues and as a result of her experiences in Africa, she returned home to Connecticut resolved to make her contributions to society through medicine. Today Anne Marie is pursuing a medical degree and intends to return to Africa to continue her work combating the AIDS epidemic.

These three examples of young creatively productive students whose early interests were nurtured through Type III studies highlight the importance of how students' gifts and talents are developed through an SEM program. This creative productivity continues as they become adults and today they are making significant contributions to their professional domains. John, Eric and Anne Marie are a small sample of the many young people I had the pleasure of working with as a teacher of gifted students. My three examples may be multiplied many times by teachers in SEM programs across the globe. It is impossible to determine the countless number of gifted children whose lives have been touched by Dr. Renzulli's work. When one considers how many gifted education programs have been designed according to the Schoolwide Enrichment Model and the thousands of young people involved in Type III productivity, it becomes hard to measure the beneficial effects of such an approach in gifted education. With this understanding, we must realize that the impressive accomplishments and contributions of children involved in Type III productivity serve as a glowing testimonial to the gentleman and scholar from the University of Connecticut, Dr. Joseph S. Renzulli.

HOW JOE RENZULLI'S WORK HAS INFLUENCED THE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN MY CLASSROOM…

Kevin Simms
Gifted Coordinator
Salem City Schools, Virginia

While I was in the Navy, I took most of my course work for an education degree to teach 6-12 Mathematics. After working on an Aircraft carrier flight deck for 9 years I entered a middle school classroom to do my student teaching. I knew right away that I would not be able to find a more similar working environment. A constantly changing atmosphere, unforeseen occurrences that lead to a disruption of planning, and the satisfaction that a days work was of value made me sure that I had chosen the right career path after my service years.

Someone must have thought my military experience would prepare me for my first assignment. I was given an 8th grade class of the "hard" cases. There were other terms that could be used but the best way to describe my students was: hard to motivate, hard to manage, hard to connect with on a personal level. I was on a team with excellent teachers and we did everything we could to show our inner-city students that the concepts were within their reach. I worked hard, but the value of math was a tough line to preach.

The same year, I was offered the extra hours option of working with the city-wide gifted program after school. I thought, "why not?" I was eager to see all aspects of the new career I had chosen, so twice a week I drove across town to teach a class that focused on Geometric concepts and new technology available for real-world problem solving. This was a huge change from my day job!

The after school program introduced me to Joe Renzulli's work with the revolving door concept of giftedness. Joe's research describing giftedness as "*in certain people, at certain times, under certain circumstances*" gave me reason to look at the curriculum I was teaching and carefully consider how best to present it to the students. The gifted students I worked with were self motivated and came to me with lesson ideas. While I started looking for experiences in my "hard" student's lives that I could tie to our work in the classroom. I slowly began to see a change in my class. I worked very hard to understand how Joe wanted every student exposed to information, I watched their reactions for interest and I offered more in-depth instruction when appropriate. Soon we were covering a variety of real-world topics tying the math and science skills they needed into the lessons the students were intrigued by.

I took classes offered through the gifted center where I worked in areas like: Curriculum Compacting, Differentiation, and Acceleration. It seemed that it all led back to Joe Renzulli's work. The Schoolwide Enrichment Model seemed to offer me the best way to work with students in an interest-based learning environment and my school was more than happy to let me experiment within my classroom.

We began to work on curricular topics as projects and the students presented their findings to the class every quarter. We used class time for instruction, but it was relevant and the students saw a need to understand the information because they needed it to complete their projects. Not every child bought in….and I had nah sayers about the effectiveness of my style….but at the end of the year my students tested as high, if not higher in some areas, on the citywide end-of-year tests as students taught in the traditional classroom settings. I gained credibility because I was finding success where little was expected…so I was left to my own discretion. I have taught every year since keeping the curricular material in my classroom tied to the interests, abilities, and enthusiasm of my students.

In my 6th year of teaching I was offered the opportunity to go to Connecticut to a conference called CONFRATUTE. I had no idea what I was agreeing to. I knew it was run by Joe Renzulli and Sally Reis through the NEAG Center at the University of Connecticut. I was interested in the topics offered: like the Schoolwide Enrichment Model, Underachievement, and Technology in the

Classroom. I cannot explain how powerful that week was for me. I saw Joe greet every attendee like he or she were family returning from a long trip. He and Sally were the most gracious hosts. The strands were taught by a hand-picked staff of wonderful, friendly and knowledgeable instructors and throughout the week, I met others that saw education as I did: *Students should drive the instruction not the curriculum.*

I left that week knowing that I had to go back. I have been back -12 times, in fact. I enrolled at UCONN to earn my masters degree in the "3 Summers" program run by Joe, Sally and Del Siegle. Over the years I have been lucky to get to know Joe personally and I count myself privileged to have him as a friend. He is passionate about improving the quality of instruction, making it more relevant and meaningful for children. I learn something new each summer and I will continue to return to Storrs…As long as the there is not a restraining order keeping me out of Connecticut. ☺

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DR. JOSEPH RENZULLI FOR EDUCATOR OF DISTINCTION AWARD

Margaret Beecher, Principal
Bugbee Elementary School
West Hartford Public Schools
West Hartford, Connecticut

Anne Marie finally decided that she wanted to study genealogy for her Type III Investigation. She had numerous discussions with her teacher, parents and grandparents about her families' history and became increasingly interested in knowing more about them. Drama was also a strong interest and the two were combined into a six-month educational adventure that would culminate in the production of a national award winning play entitled Anne Marie's Living Genealogy. During her study, she became the practicing professional, the playwright. She pored through old newspapers, read carefully selected sections of numerous history books, interviewed all family members and wrote a two-person, four scene play. Anne Marie was the main character and played herself, her mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. The similarities among them and the time in which they lived were highlighted as were the games played and songs sung. After the video tape was shown on a local television station, it was submitted to a national cable programmer's competition and won first place in children's programming.

Anne Marie, like thousands and thousands of children had these life altering learning experiences because of a small book that was published more than 30 years ago, *The Enrichment Triad Model: A Guide for Developing Defensible Programs for the Gifted*, (Renzulli, 1977). This book and Dr. Joseph Renzulli's Broadened Conception of Giftedness (1978) challenged the paradigm of the early 1970s when children's giftedness was determined primarily by an IQ test. Dr. Renzulli transformed the way educators of high ability students thought about and programmed for this population of students. The success of the Triad Model, the subsequent *Schoolwide Enrichment Model,SEM* (Renzulli & Reis, 1997) and the positive impact on children have been well researched and documented.

Perhaps less heralded has been the transformation of the teachers who have implemented these innovative programs. As one of these teachers, the Triad introduced new dimensions to my thinking about teaching and learning. The ideas and concepts were energizing and brought real life experiences to the educational arena and to children in my classroom. Since that time, I have had the good fortune to work with hundreds of children like Anne Marie and witness firsthand the change in children as learners, explorers and creators. And I have been both a leader and observer of the process of SEM permeating entire schools and of enrichment teaching and learning becoming embedded in school improvement planning efforts. As a result, there is clear evidence of an increase in achievement of all students and in the reduction in the achievement gap between

rich and poor and among different ethnic groups when SEM is implemented.

Dr. Joseph Renzulli's courage to challenge existing paradigms has changed how educators view children who enter our schools and classrooms and, most importantly, how students view themselves. Children's unique interests, learning styles, academic abilities and talents take center stage - learning expectations know no bounds, new ideas are celebrated and students are given the gift of understanding their potential to learn, to solve real problems and to lead. And as we reach into tomorrow, these will be essential for our global success.

Thank you Joe for the vast contributions you have made to children, teachers and the entire field of education and for expanding my world and changing my life as an educator and person. To my longtime mentor and treasured friend, congratulations on this Educator of Distinction Award!

Portraits in Gifted Education:
The Legacy Series

A Conversation with Joseph Renzulli

Saturday, November 1, 2008
5:00 to 6:30 PM
Tampa Convention Center Ballroom B

Don't Just Be a Part of the Audience
Join Us and Be a Part of the
Conversation!

Reflecting on a Conversation with Joe Renzulli: About Giftedness and Gifted Education

Ron Knobel and Michael Shaughnessy
Eastern New Mexico University

[Reprinted with permission from Belle Wallace, Editor, *Gifted Education International*. Originally published: Knobel, R., & Shaughnessey, M. (2002). Reflecting on a conversation with Joe Renzulli: About giftedness and gifted education. *Gifted Education International, 16,* 118-126.]

The following article compiled by the writers records the main points of a reflective conversation with Professor Joe Renzulli. The compilers explore the key ideas which have fired and motivated Joe Renzulli's focused and long, term exploration with regard to the needs of pupils, teachers, parents a administrators in the field of Gifted Education.

Introduction

Joe Renzulli is one of the foremost leaders in the field of gifted education. He currently is at the University of Connecticut and lectures and writes extensively in the field of gifted identification and assessment. In this interview his discusses his current research and reflects on the field of education of the gifted. He is most well known for his three-ring conception of giftedness.

1. What are you currently working on writing/researching?

I'm at the beginning of a whole series of research studies on the background factors in which the three-ring conception of giftedness (above average ability, task commitment, creativity) is embedded. When I first developed the three-ring conception I knew that there were many things that gave rise to that conception of giftedness, those things being personality and environment. I made the background a hound's tooth pattern rather than its original form, which was checkerboard square, because there is a, tremendous amount of interaction between and among these factors. I am now beginning, with a number of my colleagues, to design some studies that take a look at those factors, the kinds of intangibles that are often at times, difficult to study in a scientific way, although we are pursuing our research using the most rigorous design possible. Some of the factors we are looking at are: optimism, courage, sense of power to change things, charisma, sense of destiny, physical and mental energy, and the ability to develop a romance with a discipline or field of inquiry. These are the things we find in people who have changed the world—people like Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa, Mahatma Gandhi, and people like Rachel Carson, whose marvelous book led to the doing away with the use of chemicals that were devastating our environment. These people had gifts and talents that we should be examining and promoting in the young people we serve in special programs.

We're calling our studies in this area Operation Houndstooth, and we have found that there's been a tremendous amount of interest in this work, among both people in the gifted field and people interested in the general areas of leadership training, social and emotional development, and character development. The study is proceeding in two phases, the first phase is figuring out better ways to identify potential for some of those characteristics that I mentioned above; defining and measuring key factors, and looking at what the research has already revealed. Some areas like optimism have been well researched; other areas (e.g., hope and sense of destiny) haven't been studied too extensively. The second phase of this work will consist of intervention studies in which we examine the effectiveness of various ways of promoting the Houndstooth characteristics in young people. Interested persons can learn more about this work (and even participate if they would like) by checking out our web site [www.gifted.uconn.edu].

I'm also working on a new general theory that attempts to integrate learning theory; instructional or curricular theory, and the role that technology should play in learning... but it's too early to talk about this right now.

As far as the National Research Center is concerned, we are looking at a number of different studies dealing with underachieving gifted students and ways to improve the school

performance of at-risk student populations who have high potential. One of the biggest areas of frustration in the gifted field is bright kids who don't achieve, and so we are using different interventions or experimental treatments to see how we can turn around underachievement and low performance. We're taking a hardcore look at the differences between majority and minority groups. One of our studies, under the direction of Sally Reis and Jean Gubbins, is looking at urban, mainly minority, students. We want to find out what does or does not contribute to success in reading and how we can help them become more successful readers. Bob Sternberg is working on how his theory of intelligence applies to young people from diverse backgrounds, and Carolyn Callahan is working on the impact of various programmatic approaches to improved performance in diverse gifted populations. So those are some of the major things that are going on here.

2. What do you see as your biggest contribution over the past 10, 20 years?

On the theoretical side, I would say it is the Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness, the Enrichment Triad Model, and the Multiple Menu Model for developing Differentiated Curriculum, which someone kindly referred to as the only curricular theory in the field. On the practical side, I would say that it is all the instruments, instructional materials, teacher training procedures, and implementation guides that make the theoretical parts of my work easy to implement. On the leadership side, the most important contribution is unquestionably our University of Connecticut's summer Confratute Program, which has enrolled almost 18,000 people from all over the world during the last 24 years. Other major leadership activities include directing the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented since 1990. The NRC/GT has truly served as a vehicle for developing a community of scholars in our field, and on a personal note, it has been my honor and privilege to work with so many competent and committed scholars. I would include in this group more than 50 doctoral students with whom I have worked over the years, many of whom have gone on to be leading contributors to the field and who continue to remain my closest friends. I'm also proud of establishing the Three Summers Masters Program at our university and the UConn Mentor Connection, a unique summer program for high school students. Information about these various programs can be found at the web site mentioned above.

3. What is currently lacking in gifted education?

Governmental commitments, including financial support, high quality teacher training and leadership training programs, strong leadership at state and provincial education ministry levels, and an ever-emerging strong research foundation upon which to base identification and programming practices. This last need is especially important if we are to gain the respect and political support of governments and funding agencies. Unfortunately, our field has been the victim of endless unsubstantiated practices - oftentimes perpetrated by self-proclaimed experts who have not taken the time to verify through research what they are recommending. If this happened in medicine, most of us would be dead! Sometimes these people posture themselves as overlooked gifted children, and they gain attention by being seductive storytellers who pander to the vulnerabilities of parents desperately seeking solutions for their children. But if you ask the following tough questions you may find that there are no good answers: Show me your research? Point to a hundred programs that use your ideas? Do you have follow-up data on students served by your approach (not just the one or two in your seductive story)? Is there a respectable theoretical rational and research base for your ideas?

I believe that all ideas are potentially good ones and that everybody's opinion is valuable, but in the long run if we don't take the time to verify what we stand for, and in so doing, create a solid research base, we're likely to fall for anything. Limited research makes us vulnerable to the large anti-gifted establishment that is always looking for ways to run us out of business. I also think that for a field to survive and gain respect it must have trained practitioners who can deliver a good product in

schools and classrooms and who can make defensible arguments to policy makers.

4. How can we best train teachers to teach gifted children?

That's a difficult one to answer in a short period of time. But, I certainly believe in giving people that are interested in being teachers of the gifted more than just classroom courses! And now, of course, some people are getting most of their training on line. These experiences should be supplemented by working in a variety of gifted program situations with people who are successful master teachers of the gifted. One of the things that we pride ourselves on in our teacher training program is the internship component through which we put our students with people who we know are first-rate, successful teachers of the gifted. I also believe that careful selection is important when selecting candidates for training programs (as well as for teaching positions). We use an interest assessment instrument for prospective students that focuses on characteristics that are not unlike the things we look for when selecting students for gifted programs. This instrument helps us see if that "creative sparkle" necessary to inspire kids is there and if the candidate has, himself or herself, done things that reflect advanced learning, high motivation, leadership, and creativity.

5. What influence, if any, has inclusion and mainstreaming had on gifted education?

This is a difficult question to generalize about; I think that when all is said and done that a good job can be done in regular classrooms up to a given point. Beyond that, however, because regular classroom teachers have many students and a broad spectrum of needs to deal with, a broad spectrum of abilities, they can't easily go above and beyond the prescribed curriculum or speed up the pace of instruction for rapid learning students.

The kinds of individual work, especially the type that I have defined in my work as Type Three Enrichment, can only happen when there is a specialist available who knows how to guide or facilitate those kinds of activities. Type Three Enrichment is the highest level of involvement that a gifted program can provide and this can't be done easily by a regular classroom teacher who may not have the training and is dealing with large numbers and diverse needs. Regular classroom teachers can learn to do it, and I've seen some of them do it as good or better than trained G/T specialist, it's just that the range of demands brought upon regular classroom teachers makes it difficult, and in some cases, impossible for them to be able to do the kind of facilitatation necessary.

6. As we enter the new millennium, what do you see as the crucial issue in gifted education?

Believe it or not, I see one of the most crucial issues as trying to get better information about defensible programs, and practices programs out to the general public and especially to policy makers. There are so many demands being made on the education system that it is easy to think that gifted students "can make it on their own." What has always fascinated me is that the policy makers who argue for inclusion, little or no special services, and even criticize gifted education initiatives are often persons who send their own children to private schools.

Another crucial issue is the need for an integrated continuum of special services rather than thinking that a single approach (acceleration, enrichment in the regular classroom, pull out programs, special classes, etc.) is the one "right" way. Lately, an overwhelming number of educators have bought into the concept of "differentiation." This is a sound concept for general education, and even some gifted education advocates are saying that within-classroom differentiation is going to take care of our most able students. This belief is nonsense. I have lived through several iterations of the "we-can-take-care-of-gifted-students-in-the-regular classroom," and it always ends up being a smoke screen behind which bright kids get a few extra assignments and more work based on traditional (didactic) models of learning. Without specialized personnel and

differentiated learning models, we will seriously under-serve gifted students.
Two other issues are crucial. First, we need to find better ways to include underrepresented groups in special programs, and this includes females and students who learn in different ways as well as students from racial and ethnic minorities. Second, we need to do some well-designed research on the most effective ways to use the new and emerging technology. Gifted education should take the lead in this regard—otherwise we might end up using the vast resources of the Internet as one, big electronic encyclopedia.

7. How has the World Wide Web affected gifted children?

I see a lot of much more advanced kinds of resources being brought to bear on kids' work as a result of the Web. Believe me I'm not one of these kinds of persons that think that computers and the Web will save us. However, the more that I get around to schools, and these are mostly schools where we're doing research, the more I see that kids needs to have a facility to get information that is what I sometimes call "needed information". One of problems with general education is that we teach everybody the same thing, at the same time, usually at the same pace. But, information on an "as needed basis" really makes for fairly outstanding and very authentic scientific work, literary work, artistic work, and creative productivity. And by being able to access this through the Web, young people are going beyond the traditional gatekeepers of knowledge—the teacher and textbook. This access literally opens up the floodgates to advanced knowledge and is already resulting in higher levels of student productivity.

8. How can we best help gifted girls to succeed?

This is not an area that is a specialty of mine. Sally Reis, who also happens to be my wife, has among others done some outstanding work in that area. And so I'm going to skip that question with a possible exception of pointing out that there are so many societal issues related to this question that we're going to have to make some major changes in society—starting with teachers. The ways in which bright young women are viewed and the way that they view themselves is going to have to be reexamined before we will see major improvements, especially in cultures that are still a long way from some of the advancements taking place in Western countries. And males need to change the most if we are ever to achieve gender equity.

9. What do you see as the qualities of a good mentor and a good mentoring program?

The major quality of good mentor is that they are first and foremost very expert in the topic. I've seen mentor programs that randomly assign adults to children, regardless of specialization or commonality of interest. In many cases, this approach bastardizes the concept of mentoring in favor of providing "homework helpers!"

We operate a program at the University of Connecticut; I should have probably added this to the list of my accomplishments that I feel are really important. It's called the Yukon Mentor Connection. And in this program young people come to work with somebody in their area of interest on first-hand research. Cutting-edge scientists have these young people side-by-side with them almost like research assistants, as in some cases, they're closer to graduate students than they are to high school students or even under-graduates. I think that the match up of kids who absolutely love something related to, lets say, bio-technology with a person that's doing research, not just teaching them bio-technology as they would in a class or out of a text book or even tutoring them; but rather working on a research project, where the kid is side-by-side, running samples, doing experiments, and things like that. I think the second thing is, we follow this advice in the selection, it has to be people that want to work with young people. A lot of people that are very expert in an area would prefer to work alone or else they would prefer to work only with other adults. And I think we found that there are some people who absolutely adore working with what they hope will be the next generation. All people that are very committed to an area are proselytizers, they want the next generation to

love and adore their subject, or topic, or research. And so I think that this is the other part of it, the affective part, that is so important. Those two characteristics are to me what make a good mentor, and a good mentoring program. I think that there has to be a lot of opportunity for give-and-take both between the mentor, and the young people that she or he is working with; and also between the people who are working in different areas so they can exchange ideas with one another, and this interaction we also build into our Mentor Connection Program.

10. How do gifted students' learning styles differ from non-gifted students' learning styles?

There has been a small amount of research on this topic—not as much as can or should be done, but the main findings have been that gifted students prefer less structured kinds of learning experiences—projects, independent investigations, simulations, and dramatizations. But, as is always the case, we must be careful about over generalizing. We have found that some highly gifted students prefer more structured activities such as lectures and computer assisted instruction. A golden rule is that we should always look at each student individually. We should also expose students to varying styles of instruction so that they may learn appreciation for other styles, or at least help to develop the meta-cognitive skills that allow them to capitalize on their strongest styles.

11. Have you found that gifted students have a preferred cognitive information processing style? Is it sequential or simultaneous?

I haven't done any research on this topic myself but interested persons might want to take a look at the very excellent work on thinking styles conducted by Bob Sternberg.

12. Have you found that gifted students have a field-dependent or field-independent perception of their environment?

I'm not aware of any work that has been done in this area so far as gifted students are concerned. It's probably better to ask someone else about this topic.

13. Would you please describe your Learning Styles Inventory? Will the instrument distinguish between gifted and non-gifted students?

The Learning Styles Inventory is part of a series of instruments for assessing strengths; it also includes several Interest-A-Lyzers (for various age levels and subject areas), and some relatively new work that assesses expression style preferences. All the instruments have been developed through research techniques that utilize factor analytic methodology—a procedure that enables us to look at thousands of student protocols for patterns that allow us to form factors. The factors are used to prepare profiles for individual students.

The LSI asks questions about students' preferences for various instructional techniques. The patterns (factors) in the LSI range from highly structured preferences (Recitation and Drill, Lecture, etc.) to less structured preferences (e.g., Projects, Problem-Based Activities, Independent Investigations). As indicated above, research has shown that higher ability students lean in the direction of less structured instructional preferences.

14. Will your Learning Styles Test Inventory work for ages K-8, 9-12, college age students and individuals above age 30?

I don't know. Some people have used it with adults, but as a researcher I can only answer by saying that this is a research question. I am certain that a good study with 30+ persons would have to include information about non-school learning environments. I have a friend who is a specialist in adult learning, so I will kick the idea around with him.

15. What still needs to be researched in gifted education?

One thing that needs to be researched is the effectiveness of various delivery systems for various populations. We've had a hard time getting more gifted programs into areas where there are at-risk students, and sometimes we've taken programs into those areas that are based on models of learning and gifted program practices that have been successful in mostly

middle class suburban communities. I think that there are certain commonalities to all learning, but there are also different kinds of environmental influences that interact with learning. I don't think that you can take a program out of an affluent suburb and plunk it down into a hardcore urban area or a rural poor area for that matter, and say, "Here, it is. This is what you need to develop high performance in your potentially gifted kids." And so I think that that kind of research needs to be done. Studies that examine the cultural strengths, environmental and family influences, and social and emotional factors will help us understand how to better serve diverse populations.

I think that we need to look at some of those intangible characteristics that I mentioned earlier when I was talking about Operation Houndstooth. We know that these are important contributors to the success of persons of great accomplishment and creative productivity so we need to know how to better identify persons with these potentials and how to develop them in young people. I have described the Houndstooth factors as "those things that are left over after everything explainable has been explained." We need to be able to learn more about why young people with great test scores, wonderful grade point averages, and the best advantages don't go out and do the kinds of things that result in contributions to social improvement. And we need to learn how young people can balance the pursuit of material and intellectual capital with a concern for contributions to social capital—the kinds of things we do to improve society in general rather than focusing on material gain, ego enhancement, rampant consumerism, and devastation of the Earth's resources. To me, this would be the most noble goal and contribution of gifted education.

16. Motivation is a key aspect of your three-ring model. How do we accurately assess motivation and maintain it?

A very good question. Motivation must be looked at within context. I'm not motivated, for example, to do a research project just by sitting here. I get interested in something because of exposure to a new or interesting topic. That's why I built the Type I dimension into the Enrichment Triad Model. As I become more involved in the project, it takes on a life of its own, and that creates the motivation, or what I have called Task Commitment. The psychologist, Gordon Allport, called this functional autonomy - a project creates its own energy, as it were, between the person and the work to be done. We often confuse motivation in young people with simply getting good grades. Motivation to get good grades is a good thing. But the kind of motivation that I talk about in the three-ring conception (i.e., Task Commitment), this is something that always occurs within a context. You have to get into it by personalizing the problem or task, and you have to get involved with it, and then you're either going to quit or else you're going to keep on working. Your work ethic is going to increase because you are really heavily involved within the problem area and within the context of the problem. Our research has shown that, while motivation is a general construct, like being motivated to be a good student Task Commitment is always developed and heightened within the context of a real and present problem for a particular student. That's why I view Type III Enrichment as an essential service in a gifted program.

17. Are teachers really prepared and trained to engage in enrichment activities?

Some are and some aren't. We need to be more precise about what we call enrichment teaching and learning when we work with teachers. We also have to guard against the fact that many education systems are becoming more prescriptive. The whole issue of prescribed standards and high stakes testing in a lot of ways is squeezing good enrichment out of the curriculum. So therefore, it is very important that we not only look at teachers (there are a lot of great teachers out there), but they often work within a system that in many cases doesn't allow them to do enrichment teaching. One teacher recently told me that her job should be defined as a "test-prep and textbook administrator!" We need to look within the systems' requirements that are placed on teachers and we have got to change these requirements so that there is greater balance between knowledge acquisition

and creative productivity. You can't teach a teacher how to do several great enrichment activities and then they walk into a school that's using a very prescribed method that scripts the lesson for the teachers.

18. What do you see as the most important social/emotional concerns of gifted children?

This is not an area that I am especially an expert at. There are other people who have certainly done more work in that area than I have. Maybe five years from now I might know a little bit more because we are taking a look at some of these things in Operation Houndstooth.

[Editors Note: See www.gifted.uconn.edu for most recent research.]

19. What are your feelings about the current standardized I.Q. tests?

I've always said that IQ tests tell us something. But they don't begin to tell us everything, and in some cases they may not even be telling us what is most important about a young person's potential. The kinds of things that result in extremely high levels of creative productivity on the parts of young people and adults, come from combinations of characteristics which I've tried to summarize in the Three Ring Conception of Giftedness and others such as Howard Gardner have summarized in the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. I'd much rather have a portfolio; several samples of work that a person has already done to both estimate potential, and to develop relevant experiences that further that potential. My colleagues and I have developed a vehicle called The Total Talent Portfolio, and we use it for these purposes. The Total Talent Portfolio looks at youngster's abilities, interests, and learning style in terms of both assessment instruments and work already completed. When I say abilities I do not mean just information that comes from tests or grade point averages. If you have someone coming into your office for a job as a journalist or a photographer, or an editor, you want to see some examples of their work, you don't want to just to look at their diplomas. That is why the concept of a talent portfolio is so prominent in our work.

20. What question have I neglected to ask?

I think you did a good job; you've certainly covered the most important issues facing the field today. People oftentimes ask me what do I think is the future of gifted education, or do we have a future? I believe that the best way to predict the future is to create it. If we have people that are working at all levels: practitioners, administrators, coordinators, state and ministry officials, teacher trainers, active parents and professional advocates, and university researchers, then people in government will see the value of devoting resources to gifted education. A concerted effort on the part of people in many different roles is how we get good work done. And good work leads to public acceptance which, in turn, leads to financial support. I also believe that we need lots and lots of people who are involved full-time or who are mostly full-time in gifted education. You can't make and sustain a movement if we only have people who are temporarily or peripherally involved. When people ask me what is the most important goal of gifted education, my answer is always the same: There should be a full-time gifted education specialist in every school in the nation. When that happens in our country and the other countries of the world, gifted education will be able to achieve its potential as a major force in the improvement all aspects of the human condition; and the gifted children of the world will have the opportunity to contribute their talents to these improvements.

I view all of our work in this field as a war against the forces of mediocrity, conformity, and the societal institutions that knowingly or unknowingly contribute to the suppression of creativity, social justice, and the liberation of the human mind and spirit. I view myself as a soldier in this war, and there are still many battles to be fought before we achieve the equity that gifted youngsters need and deserve.

Reader's Corner: Book Reviews and Books of Interest

Daniel Pink will be giving the Opening Keynote at the NAGC Annual Convention in Tampa, Florida

Meaning, Happiness and Success in a Changing World

A Whole New Mind
Daniel Pink, Author
(2006) Riverhead Books.
ISBN: 978-1-59448-171-0

A Review by:
Jason A. Helfer, PhD and Stephen T. Schroth, PhD
Knox College

Daniel Pink explores research related to neurology, psychology, education, and media and cultural studies to substantiate the primary claim of *A Whole New Mind*. Forms of thought that bracket emotional, aesthetic, and synthetic aspects of perception, while highly useful in the world, are not sufficient for economic competitiveness and individual flourishing in the twenty-first century. This review will examine the structure and central ideas of the text as well as consider Pink's ideas as they impact and affect those working with gifted children.

A Whole New Mind consists of two parts in nine chapters in addition to an introduction and afterword. Part One, consisting of chapters one through three, provides the justification for Pink's ideas within Part Two. Chapter one provides a general overview of neuroimaging research that Pink's uses to distinguish between L-Directed Thinking, which is used in developing logical arguments and valued in careers such as law, medicine, and the sciences, and R-Directed Thinking, which is metaphorical, contextual, and aesthetic, and simultaneous. Pink does not prefer one form of thinking to the other. Rather, *A Whole New Mind* is an attempt to demonstrate that the ways of thinking and interacting with other global citizens necessitates a different set of interpersonal and individual skills for success in the twenty-first century.

Pink asserts that the growing importance of developing an individual's R-Directed thinking, in addition to and not at the expense of L-Directed thinking, is due to three occurrences: Abundance, Asia, and Automation. *Abundance* is manifested in the increased choices and material wealth many individuals possess. *Asia* represents the increased outsourcing of both skilled and unskilled jobs to India, China, and other such places. *Automation* is understood as the movement to use technology to supplant routine activities in the work-place. All three combine to greatly change past practices and valued skill sets.

Chapter three introduces the ideas of *high concept* and *high touch*. High concept represents the ability to create and recognize beauty, see relationships and construct cogent narratives. High touch encompasses the ability to empathize, understand subtleties of human interaction, and to find joy in one's work in the quest for meaning. Each of these ideas is elucidated through a variety of examples, as well as though contrasting important ideas of the Information Age (L-Directed Thinking) with the "new" Conceptual Age (R-Directed Thinking).

Part Two, consisting of chapters four through nine, extends the previous beliefs through the specification of six essential senses one needs to develop to be successful in this new era. The six senses are: Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play and Meaning. Pink does not present the six senses as hierarchical, although they can be seen as such. *Design* is understood as the importance of the aesthetic in the production of material and ideological goods. Design affects not only the appearance or presentation of the product, but also sensitivity to Design affects how the individual uses the product. *Story* symbolizes the importance of a contextually situated narrative in creating or developing understanding. Story is important not only to transmit information between individuals, but also as a means of sharing one's

identity in and through a variety of contexts. *Symphony* signifies the interplay between the abilities of analysis and synthesis. For Pink, it is no longer useful to simply see the elements of an argument or the practical use of an object. Rather, Symphony emphasizes reaching out and constructing relationships between sometimes disparate objects and ideas.

Empathy is traditionally understood as the ability to feel with someone. Generally, Pink constructs Empathy in this way. Empathy, however, also encompasses the ability to forge relationships and act upon one's sense of the other. Put differently, Pink sees the traditional construct of empathy as intersubjectivity, whereas his concept of Empathy also necessarily includes the ability of the individual to "do" something with his or her understanding. *Play* characterizes an attitude toward interacting with the world. Play is important insofar as it allows the individual to see new ideas that may be outside of traditional L-Directed Thinking situations. *Meaning* embodies the central quest of individuals in the twenty-first century. For Pink, happiness is an important goal of existence, a view that is supported by a growing body of psychological research. Happiness transcends one's wealth or material possessions. Above all, Meaning can be viewed as the quest for happiness.

Pink concludes each chapter in Part Two with a series of activities that can be completed to develop these possibly underutilized abilities. Pink believes that individuals possess each of these senses, but that individuals may have overlooked their importance or that these senses may have atrophied. Pink does not claim that developing these senses will halt global change. He does, however, suggest that in order to continue developing as individuals and a nation and in order to provide potentially useful ideas into the global marketplace individuals must think through the importance of the six senses.

Although this text appears to have been constructed for the corporate world, Pink focuses on individual growth within work and creative spaces as well as economic competitiveness. As a result the text has applications for with the teaching and learning of gifted children. Many educational opportunities are currently available for the gifted child, and most focus on the development of the social, emotional, and academic needs of the child. Pink's book is especially valuable and relevant because each sense Pink presents and develops, as well as the examples used to support his claims, are grounded in past practice. R-Directed Thinking does not mean that L-Directed Thinking is no longer useful. One can only improve gifted students' R-Directed Thinking if one is also building their L-Directed Thinking. Supporting creativity or interest in a specific discipline is important and programs and methods of instruction must first and foremost focus on the history and trends within a field of practice. Pink understands and validates the important work that so many teachers of gifted children put in to develop their many talents. *A Whole New Mind* provides an abundance of ideas for those responsible for gifted children's instruction and development.

Conceptual Foundations is the newsletter of the Conceptual Foundations Network of the National Association for Gifted Children,
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Message from Elizabeth A. Romey, Conceptual Foundations Network Membership Chair

As the time for NAGC's annual conference draws near, a network officer's mind turns to thoughts of... increased membership. This year, with exciting activities like our Legacy Series of interviews showcasing the leaders who have defined the conceptual foundations of our field, we are in a wonderful position to encourage new members to be a part of our network.

In many ways, the Conceptual Foundations Network is among the best suited to be at the forefront of the "next generation" of gifted education theory. While our Legacy Series focuses on those whose contributions have already shaped the field, an equally important part of our network's mission is to provide support for the conceptual and theoretical "new blood" who will ask— and answer— the questions that face gifted education in the twenty-first century. We have a unique opportunity to encourage theoretical and conceptual work as well as research and practice, which makes us an ideal venue for up-and-coming new theorists. Now is the time to reach out to the next generation in gifted education even as we celebrate our theoretical heritage.

Do you want to join the Conceptual Foundations Network? Visit www.nagc.org

Conceptual Foundations Network 2008 NAGC Convention Special Events

Conceptual Foundations Work Session
Thursday, October 30
2:00 to 4:00 PM
Tampa Convention Center Room 35

Conceptual Foundations Business Meeting
Friday, October 31
12:15 to 1:15 PM
Tampa Convention Center Room 35

Conceptual Foundations Network Social
Saturday, November 1, 2008
4:00 to 4:45 PM
Tampa Convention Center Exhibit Hall

Portraits in Gifted Education: The Legacy Series
Featuring: A Conversation with Joseph Renzulli
Saturday, November 1, 2008
5:00 to 6:30 PM
Tampa Convention Center Ballroom B

Attend and Have Your Voice Count!

NAGC 2008 Conceptual Foundations General Session Offerings

Friday October 31st	**THE POLITICS OF GIFTED EDUCATION, INSIDE OUT**		
	Terence Paul Friedrichs and Wenda Sheard	7:30 - 8:30 AM	Tampa Convention Center Room 31-33
	GENEROSITY AND EVIL TOWARD OTHERS: THE DYNAMICS OF PARTICULARIST MORALITY AND THE GIFTED		
	Don Ambrose	10:30 - 11:30 AM	Tampa Convention Center Room 31-33
	A THEORY OF HIGH-END LEARNING AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS AND RELATED RESOURCES		
	Joseph S. Renzulli	1:30 - 2:30 PM	Tampa Marriott Waterside Grand Salon E
	TELLING LIVES: THE BIOGRAPHICAL METHOD IN GIFTED EDUCATION		
	Ann Robinson	1:30 - 2:30 PM	Tampa Convention Center Room 25
Saturday, November 1st	**WHAT IF EDUCATION WERE THE GIFT?**		
	LeoNora M. Cohen, James Gallagher, Joseph S. Renzulli, F. Richard Olenchak and Don Ambrose	7:30 - 8:30 AM	Tampa Marriott Waterside Grand Salon E
	THE GIFTED LABEL: PERSON OR PROGRAM?		
	Dona J Matthews and Joanne Foster	7:30 - 8:30 AM	Tampa Marriott Waterside Grand Salon D
	SHOW THEM THE MONEY! ECONOMIC ARGUMENTS FOR GIFTED EDUCATION		
	Pamela R Clinkenbeard	10:00 - 11:00 AM	Tampa Marriott Waterside Grand Salon D
	CHANGING THE WORLD THROUGH ENGENDERING: A NEW CONCEPTON OF GIFTEDNESS AND CREATIVITY		
	LeoNora M. Cohen, Don Ambrose, Sherry P. Bovey, Erin Morris Miller and Jean Peterson	1:45 - 2:45 PM	Tampa Marriott Waterside Grand Salon D
	RESPONDING TO ASYNCHRONOUS DEVELOPMENT IN THE GIFTED: TOWARD A THEORY OF DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENTIATION		
	Kathi Kearney	3:00 - 4:00 PM	Tampa Convention Center Room 11-12
	WECHSLER'S "ABILITY TO AN EXTRAORDINARY DEGREE": EXTENDED NORMS ON THE WISC-IV		
	Linda Kreger Silverman, Tommie G. Cayton, John D. Wasserman and Kathi Kearney	7:30 - 8:30 AM	Tampa Convention Center Room 5 & 6
	THE BIGGEST LOSERS: GIFTED CHILDREN IN TODAY'S INCLUSIONARY SCHOOLS		
	Jim Delisle	7:30 - 8:30 AM	Tampa Convention Center Room 7-9

NAGC 2008 Conceptual Foundations Poster Session Offerings

Friday October 31st	**PERCEPTIONS OF GIFTEDNESS: WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK? HOW DOES PERCEPTION IMPACT SERVICE?**		
	Denise J. Drain	10:30 - 11:30 AM	Tampa Convention Center Poster Display Area
	RE-FRAMING IDENTIFICATION+DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS=MORE ETHICAL PROCESS		
	Sue A Harvey, Pat Schock and Joan Jacobs	1:30 - 2:30 PM	Tampa Convention Center Poster Display Area
	EDUCATION AS TRANSFORMATION: AN INTRODUCTION TO TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING THEORY		
	Nicolas Masi	2:45 - 3:45 PM	Tampa Convention Center Poster Display Area
Saturday, November 1st	**PROFILING: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO GIFTED IDENTIFICATION**		
	Linda W. Hall, Ardene D. Bunch, Michelle McArdle and Jane Garriott	10:00 - 11:00 AM	Tampa Convention Center Poster Display Area
	AUTONOMY, GIFTEDNESS, AND EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES: THROWING THE BABY OUT WITH THE BATHWATER		
	Jason A Helfer and Stephen T Schroth	10:00 - 11:00 AM	Tampa Convention Center Poster Display Area
	ACCELERATION: FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE - BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS		
	Beth Hahn, Nicole Williams and Mary Rizza	11:15 - 12:15 PM	Tampa Convention Center Poster Display Area
	PERCEPTIVE PRACTICE: A HISTORICAL LOOK AT THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS OF THE GIFTED THROUGH THE LENS OF PRAGMATISM.		
	Jamie MacDougall	1:45 - 2:45 PM	Tampa Convention Center Poster Display Area
	WHO IS IN THE GIFTED PROGRAMS?/ HOW HE OR SHE SHOULD BE SELECTED?		
	Hang Eun Lee, Mee Sook Kim and Hong Ran Lee	3:00 - 4:00 PM	Tampa Convention Center Poster Display Area
	WHAT INTERDISCIPLINARY LITERATURE ON DABROWSKI'S THEORY CAN OFFER GIFTED EDUCATION		
	Cheryl M Ackerman and Qinghua Nian	3:00 - 4:00 PM	Tampa Convention Center Poster Display Area

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