

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS



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

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Pushing the Envelope with Poise and Grace



The Conceptual Foundations Network has always sought to encourage intellectual exploration and lively debate. In this edition we continue that tradition. Our new Chair, Robert Shultz, sets a challenge to our members in his inaugural column. How will you respond?

Our outgoing Chair, Abbey Cash, continues to advocate and support our mission through the Legacy Series. This year we honor James Gallagher with tributes that speak to his ability to be both the consummate advocate and the consummate gentleman. In addition, we include a reprint of Gallagher's article, *Unspeakable Thoughts*, which challenges us to explore our fundamental assumptions about gifted education.

We then turn to an exploration of the life philosophy of Josh Waitzkin in Carlin and Rosa's review of the book, *The Art of Learning*. Waitzkin is giving the Opening Keynote at the annual convention. Our final article represents our goal to encourage teachers to grapple with theory and foundational ideas. Drs. Schroth and Helfer, along with their students, describe the merits of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences as an entry point into exploring the meaning of intelligence and how to apply this knowledge in the classroom. The linking of theory with practice and aggressive advocacy with gracious diplomacy is the key to advancing the field!

~ Erin Morris Miller, Editor

A MESSAGE FROM THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS CHAIR

Robert Schultz



Gifted Studies at the Cusp of Extinction

The foundation of many schools relies on an unrecognized, yet socially accepted set of guidelines adhering to tenets of assembly line management. The earliest days of school inflict heavy losses on the spirit and creative drive children bring into the setting. In a frontal assault, schooling attacks individuality in an effort to inflict social control (social efficiency) and procedural alignment upon students. Children learn what to do, when to do it, and how it is to be done. They are expected to act when told, not before or after, in a manner reflecting the compliant behavior of automatons.

It is just this situation that gifted individuals abhor. In many ways, schooling does little more than cage the free-spirited intellect of the gifted child. She is manipulated into a state of compliance, with behaviorism used against her in the effort to coerce and conform. *What is the use of school for the gifted learner?* I wonder why this is not an appropriate question to ask.

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The Sense of Her Self

She left home that first day, excited but scared
She came home exhausted and flustered.

She left home, Day 2, anxious to learn
She came home, schooled in compliance.

She left home midweek, frustrated and stressed
She came home with a note from the teacher.

“She needs to listen and do what she is told.”
Reprimanded for non-compliance, justice was
levied against her.

She left home, Day 4, angry and deflated
She came home tired and subdued.

She left home at week’s end broken in spirit
She came home excited and smiling
A slip of paper earned for good behavior.

Proud Parents swooned over her.
She felt useful and happy.

What Have We Done?!

As is the heritage of our network, I will “push the envelope” with my columns in the newsletter. The goal is to focus thought on the foundations of gifted studies, pointing out issues and accounts that might guide our development as professionals. It is my hope these brief accosts on your psyche provide points of reflection and begin a conversation that helps our field of gifted studies move out of the doldrums of scholarly thought.

Indeed, this is the place we currently find ourselves adrift. From my perspective, nothing substantive has grown within the field in the past decade or more. We are tending current crops nourished by theories that fertilized the landscape of our forebears. We haven’t noticed that the yields are diminishing. Gifted Studies finds itself at the cusp of extinction--the first programs cut, the last programs funded, the population of individuals who “...*Should* get it on their own....They’re gifted after all!”

It is time to inject gifted studies with newfound energy and excitement. It’s time to challenge us to become more than mere tenders of the current field. Are we up to the challenge? Are you up to the task?



A MESSAGE FROM THE OUTGOING CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS CHAIR

Abbey Block Cash



It seems impossible that I began my leadership role with the Conceptual Foundations Division (now Network) nearly 10 years ago! Throughout my leadership tenure as Assistant Program Chair, Program Chair, and Network Chair, CF has weathered many changes. These include, in part, a new governing structure that places the Chair Elect rather than the Programming Chair in line for the Chair’s role, organizational-wide elections; new NAGC by-laws; a new Executive Director (Nancy Green) and staff (Nicole Daniel, Karen Yoho and others); a mechanism to create Special Interest Groups (SIGs); a Network Board Representative position (currently held by Carol Tieso); a reduced number of NAGC board members; the implementation of online proposal submissions and network programming; a blind review process that is consistent across Networks; and the establishment of a facilitating body called the Network Communications Committee (NCC).

I would be the first one to admit that I am not certain that all of these additions represent improvements; however, change takes time, and I presently reserve comment while hoping for the best.

Accomplishments:

I am more certain of how I feel about the many accomplishments the Conceptual Foundations Network (CF) has made over the last 10 years, and most of these have been achieved *only* with the support and cooperation of many dedicated CF members. Having CF members introduce the speakers who present in the CF strand and the evaluation of their offerings was first established by our previous, visionary Chair, Cheryl Ackerman, and later refined by Nora Cohen, our out-going Program Chair, with my assistance. CF has consistently attracted high quality speakers (e.g., Don Ambrose, Linda Silverman, Joe Renzulli), and innovative proposal submissions to our Network, and likewise, many of these individuals have volunteered to do blind-reviews to maintain workshop offerings that have broad appeal and that are important. Our

reviewers include notable people such as Michael Piechowski, Jim Delisle, and Lawrence Coleman.

The *Legacy Series* provides the opportunity to honor and interview a great researcher/educator in the field of gifted education, and it is one of the accomplishments of which CF and I personally can be most proud. We have previously created DVD's of Annemarie Roeper and Joe Renzulli and this year we will feature Jim Gallagher. Last year's interview with Joe captured the interest of upwards of 500 conference attendees, and the videos are also very popular for personal use and for instructional purposes in university classrooms.

Other noteworthy achievements include devising a number of Wednesday Academies in collaboration with other networks. In the past, we have co-sponsored pre-conference workshops on Dabrowski's theories. This year, CF partnered with Global to present *Nothing is so Practical as a Good Theory: Global Perspectives on Giftedness from Past to Present*. CF has also created the position of Membership Chair, which is held by Elizabeth Romey. This year, for the first time in a long time, CF's membership numbers have increased 20%, and we feel this is directly linked to Elizabeth's efforts and our increased visibility connected with the Legacy Series. Erin Morris Miller, our extraordinary Newsletter Editor, who is now assisted by our Assistant Newsletter Editor, Stephen Schroth, creates two excellent CF Newsletters each year (in the fall and spring); they contain select-reprinted articles that enhance the newsletter's theme, along with many original contributions and manuscripts. Finally, CF prides itself on focusing on its primary goal:

Meeting the needs of gifted children, their families, and the educators and researchers who work in support of this underserved population of learners.

Our workshops, programs, outreach efforts, articles, and advocacy efforts are all geared for this purpose.

Future Goals:

CF looks to its new leadership team to keep its mission active, current, and purposeful. I have complete confidence that our new Network Chair, Robert Schultz, assisted by our Chair Elect, Elizabeth Romey will work to keep our visions both innovative and operational. Our new Program Chair, Kathi Kearney, who will be assisted by Barbara Romey, will champion our programming efforts. For

continuity purposes, I will remain as Treasurer and continue to Chair the Legacy Series Committee, which now boasts 15 members including, among others, Alexinia Baldwin, Michele Kane, Erin Morris Miller, and Shelagh Gallagher. We also welcome new Legacy supporters Suzanne McPherson, William Keilty, and Jessica Cannady. Our leadership will be called on to use their considerable skills, energy, knowledge of technology, presentation ability, persuasive writings, and research acumen to meet the challenges that the CF Network will face in the coming years. I am also counting on receiving support from our wonderful CF members to continue doing blind program reviews, volunteering to do workshop introductions, helping with Network projects, and providing suggestions and feedback whenever this is necessary.

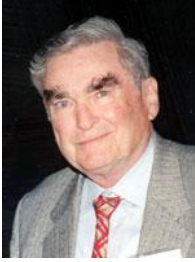
Au Revoir:

I am most sincere when I say I appreciate having had the opportunity to be part of the CF leadership these last 10 years, and to help promote its goals. I have labored to be a good custodian of its mission and to represent the interests of its membership within the NAGC community, and during yearly conferences. As I continue working as Chair of the Legacy Series Committee I look forward to continued support and assistance from CF members. I am currently involved in talks with the NAGC Board in an effort to make this effort a permanent part of NAGC. I believe honoring its mentors and hearing their message in their own voice is integral to the organization; it should not be CF's responsibility, alone. The Series requires hundreds of hours of devotion before culminating in a video, and this, too, should receive assistance from the greater organization.

And, finally, I value that I have met wonderful people who have become colleagues, and made many friends out of mere acquaintances. *As a result, I feel that my efforts have been well rewarded!*



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Conceptual Foundations Network
of the
National Association for Gifted Children,
1707 L Street NW, Suite 550
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 785-4268



Tributes to James Gallagher: A Gentleman Scholar

My Father's Gifts

By Shelagh Gallagher, Ph.D.

Anyone meeting James Gallagher today would see, quite frankly, a middle class white guy in a suit. He really doesn't look like a tireless advocate of *children on education's fringe*—the handicapped, the poor, the gifted. Except for the streak of radicalism that comes with being Irish, there's not much that explains his unceasing advocacy, his commitment to students who lack the needed resources to stretch their own horizons. At least, he doesn't look like that from the outside. My vantage point is a bit different. As both daughter and colleague I see that my father's career is not only natural, it's practically inevitable. Understanding where the man came from clarifies both the source of his devotion and provides a broader sense of the gifts he has bestowed.

A Brief History of Jim. James John Gallagher was born in 1926 into a family with strong Irish roots, just two generations away from the Old Sod. He carries many markers of his Irish heritage—a love of a good joke, a great tenor voice, a preternatural fondness for limericks and a sensitive spirit. From the age of three he was raised by his mother in a single parent household. His mother, however, was one of 13 children, 8 of whom lived to adulthood. So while nothing could quite make up for the absence of a father, Dad was supported by a clan of uncles and aunts, great uncles and great aunts. Especially important in this network was his grandfather, James Walsh, a prominent businessman who dad describes as an unparalleled example of moral and social responsibility.

1926 was also the eve of the Great Depression and the family went from riches to rags when Dad was still young. The most influential lessons of that time were not of losing, but of giving. He watched on as his grandfather sacrificed to pay his employees out of his own pocket rather than have them face

unemployment. When his mother, looking for a way to support her son, got a degree in Special Education and his life was filled with stories about ways to help handicapped children learn.

Dad was fortunate in his own education. After only two weeks in school Dad was skipped from first to third grade. This attracted some attention and he was referred for testing, and he qualified for a scholarship to go to the prestigious private Falk Academy, whose mission was to test innovative teaching methods. He took two buses to school and two buses home every day to take advantage of the opportunity. His experiences at the Falk Academy ignited his love of learning -- and taught him what it felt like to be the poor kid in a rich kid's school.

Like many of his generation, Dad enlisted when America engaged in WWII; he was 16 when he joined the Navy's corps of engineers. When the war was over, he was lifted up by yet another support system. His family still had no money to send him to college, but thanks to the GI Bill he went to the University of Pittsburgh where he majored in Biology, and from there to Penn State where in 1951 he received a PhD. in Clinical and Child Psychology (although to my mind his greatest achievement of that era was persuading my mother to marry him in 1949).

So while I can understand why some might see Dad as a 'white guy in a suit' what I see is a disadvantaged gifted child raised by a single parent; a perceptive boy who understood that he was able to achieve because there were systems in place to provide him with support, and an understanding that society as a whole would benefit if more children had similar systems of support. He had soaked in the realization that the opportunity to ask questions and ponder possibilities should be available to all children regardless of income. From this vantage point his passion and commitment make perfect sense, they are his response to his own experience.

His Gifts. Just as it seems to me Dad's career springs from his early experiences, so too I think his accomplishments are really the result of themes that grew early on and pervade both his professional and personal life. Through his words and actions he leaves these as his true gifts to me, to our field, or to anyone else who cares to embrace them.

Put Family First. Dad's belief in family has guided much of his work, especially while directing the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, where Dad devoted much time and effort supporting research like the Abecedarian project which demonstrated the importance of early intervention in the education of low income students and the importance of providing technical assistance to the family so that they could support the child's growth. Dad's personal love of family is equally intense; to this day nothing makes him happier than having us gathered under one roof.

Provide Support. In one way or another, Dad's career has been about providing supports for children in need. Being a conceptual thinker, he sees that it often isn't enough to have one-on-one personal support, there also has to be an invisible infrastructure for those in need and also to support people who do the supporting. This has influenced his contributions to influential legislation like the IDEA and the regulations for IEPs in addition to his efforts to support passage of first the Marland Report 1972, his participation in the technical assistance offered through the National/State Leadership Training Institute, and his share of the efforts to pass new federal legislation that became the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Act in 1993.

Build Networks. Dad has always believed that it's ever so much better to get along than to disagree; I've always credited this to the 'sensitive Irish poet' aspect of his nature. This makes him a born consensus builder, always looking for the common ground that will lay contentiousness to rest and smooth the way to productive outcomes. It's how he gets so much done. It's a skill he honed while working for the Department of Education as Director of the Bureau for Education of the Handicapped. He put the skill to good use working with a diverse and varied group whose common interest was to establish a state supported residential high school for gifted students: the North Carolina School of Science and Math. It has also made him capable of apologizing to his teenage daughter after a fight and admitting when he thought he was wrong—a rare quality.

Do Good. Throughout his career Dad has consistently selected projects that would create a demonstrably good outcome. He prides himself on being fair and egalitarian, and the few times I've seen him wince were when people see him otherwise, like the critics of the North Carolina State Competency Test accused him of bigotry. While you can't make progress without ruffling some feathers, I've never known him to make decisions based on a desire to advance his own name or to play favorites with others. In fact, the most valuable gifts he has given me are the words of advice he gave as guideposts early in my career. While I've failed time and again to keep true to his wisdom, his wisdom has never failed me: 1) avoid letting ego dominate your actions, 2) be honest and trustworthy, 3) always give credit where credit is due, and 4) when someone else has a good idea, say so.

Don't get me wrong, we don't always agree. And he's not perfect-- thank goodness! We all know how overrated perfection is. But he's done great good. Partly this was the zeitgeist of his time, working in a new field with lots of jobs to do and few people to do those jobs. But Jim Gallagher's achievements are due to more than being in the right place at the right time, they are a direct outgrowth of the person he is and the beliefs he's held throughout his life. Who wouldn't want someone like that for a father? I sure am glad he's mine.

Role Model

By Rena Subotnik, Ph.D.

The first edition of Jim Gallagher's *Teaching the Gifted Child* was an early influence on my interest in the psycho-social variables associated with talent development. Through his use of prototype students, Dr. Gallagher vividly conveyed the permutations and combinations of factors that might affect the behavior and achievement of gifted children.

Dr. Gallagher also modeled how to think like a policy maker. By way of his Palcuzzi's Ploy, for example, he masterfully established a scenario and a set of arguments designed to undermine audiences' conceptions of elitism. When framed in terms of support for athletic prowess, educators will often express support for extra funding, special coaches and selective recruitment. In light of the ploy, audiences had to explain why it was more questionable to call the recognition and support of academic talent elitist. Although the comparison between athletic talent development and academic

talent development is not a perfect one, the ploy forces listeners to question knee jerk reactions to gifted education.

Jim Gallagher has been with us through good and bad times. When our field struggled to be taken seriously by others in the education and research community, we benefitted immeasurably from the prestige Jim had won in the special education domain. The fact that this towering scholar in special education was so committed to our field brought us much needed gravitas, and helped many in the education community to view gifted education as a form of special education, opening doors to funding and policy change.

On a personal front, we all envy his ability to bring out the humor and good will of everyone in a room. Jim has always been kind to everyone, and always made himself accessible to the next generation of scholars. Through his engagement with us, he encouraged us and demonstrated his faith that we could carry on the torch of leadership established by our founding mothers and fathers.

Finally, I must comment on how productive Jim has been in our field. He has generated “memes” in the form of an intellectual legacy of scholarship, practice and policy. Unlike anyone else so far, he’s also managed (with lovely Ronnie) to generate “genes,” in the form of Shelagh Gallagher – a major figure in our field.

Thank you, Jim Gallagher for your contributions to policy, research, practice, and the future of gifted education.

More than a Name

By Laurence Coleman, Ph.D.

I appreciate the invitation to say something about my friend and colleague, Jim Gallagher.

Jim is someone I learned about when I was working on my masters in mental retardation as a Kennedy fellow in 1965. My thesis was on the history of the educational program at the Southbury Training School near New Haven, CT. Jim had been a young psychologist in that program. He was simply a name. I had no idea who he would become in special education or that he would figure in my own development. Several years later while working on my doctorate my major advisor, Lou Fliegler, introduced me to Jim and Sam Kirk, two giants in the

field, at a CEC meeting. Now, I knew who they were. I was awed and impressed by their cordiality, the fact that such eminent people would be so gracious to a student.

When I decided to focus my attention on the special education of gifted children I kept running into that Gallagher name again. His books on giftedness and on exceptionality were significant in my early introduction to both fields. I learned over time that whenever you wanted a deeper thought on a topic look for Jim’s name.

If I have any place in our field, I largely owe it to Jim Gallagher (and of course, to my friend Tracy Cross). I am sure Jim would dismiss my comment. But, my own scholarship has been on the fringe of the field. Jim recognized it had some merit when he was editor of the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*. He published my first study of how teachers of the gifted think; and the study on giftedness as a social handicap also known as the stigma of giftedness paradigm. On the basis of those papers, I think, he asked me to be a reviewer. Some years later he invited me to consider applying for the editorship of JEG. I would not have thought of myself in such a role, but his invitation influenced me to try. To my everlasting gratitude this led to a wonderful intellectual voyage I could not have anticipated. Jim has a huge list of publications; no one can equal it for scope and depth. He has an intimate understanding of the connection between theory and practice. Among those many pieces several have influenced me greatly and I would urge others to read them— his study of questioning and levels of thinking with Thelma Crowder; his thoughtful reviews of the field; his piece on education as a weak treatment; on the fuzziness of the giftedness construct; the piece on the non-normality of the normal curve that he did with Nancy Robinson, and any of his writings on policy.

We have had many good conversations, especially when it involves a wee glass of Irish whiskey. Jim is a genuine good guy. In our many conversations I have never heard him say anything denigrating about another person. For example, he clearly exhibited great restraint talking about George Bush. I have seen him in heated discussions receive critiques from folks who were less informed and self-serving in their remarks. He maintained civility. Jim is someone who is unquestionably a committed advocate for exceptional children of all kinds, but within that passion he does not become mean spirited about those who disagree with him. There is something to

learn from his model. I have always enjoyed the repartee between Mary Ruth Coleman and “Dr. Gallagher,” as she always calls him. For all his prowess and generosity, he is not one to build a coterie of acolytes. However, he does have many admiring fans and I count myself fortunate to be one of them.

James J. Gallagher Statesman of Our Field

By Nicholas Colangelo, Ph.D.

I first became acquainted with Jim Gallagher 35 years ago through his textbook, *Teaching the Gifted Child*, which was the text in the field. He was already a highly respected leader because of his research and analysis of issues in the field. Jim was always at the foreground of policy and recognized the importance of the role of policy in order for gifted education’s impact to extend beyond its limited borders. Jim was then – and still is – the man with the “big picture” in his thinking and his writing.

His writing is clear because his thinking is clear. He knew from his experiences in Special Education and his dealings with policy makers (and politicians) that evidence carries the day. Jim focused on what would move the field, collectively, thus providing individual gifted students and their teachers greater opportunities.

After meeting Jim and getting to know him, it is apparent that what you read (of his) is what you get. Discussion focuses on big picture issues. I especially remember his argument about the importance for researchers in the field (especially new ones) to publish in journals *outside* of gifted education (e.g. journals in APA, AERA, and ACA). Jim was concerned that too many researchers in the field were only “talking” to one another. He understood that influence had to do with reaching out, not constricting within. His thinking has been fundamental in influencing me in establishing the Wallace Research Symposium on Talent Development at the University of Iowa. A distinguishing feature of the Wallace is the integration of researchers from various fields outside of gifted education. Quite Gallagherian!

To me Jim has been the outstanding policy thinker in our field. He knows his stuff and he is persuasive. I pay attention to anything he has to say.

Jim has been a terrific mentor to so many of us. He certainly helped me in my career with his caring, support, and insights. A conversation with Jim is always interesting. If the topic is Carolina basketball, he knows it . . . global education, he knows it. . . and, of course, gifted education, he knows it. And if it is grandchildren, oh yes, he knows it. Time spent with Jim is time well spent. I always walk away knowing more and appreciating the nuances of an issue.

Jim was a leader in NAGC and led with energy, intellect, and caring. Our field would not have progressed as far as we have if not for him. I do consider James Gallagher the statesman of our field.

A Tribute to James J. Gallagher

Mary Ruth Coleman, Ph.D.

Life takes many twists and turns and, according to Dr. Gallagher, our path through the years is often charted by serendipitous events. Dr. Gallagher talks about meeting the right person, Sam Kirk, at the right time (1953), and being offered the opportunity to carry out important research at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He reflects on being recruited to head-up the first Bureau of Education in 1966 and taking on the responsibility for shaping the nations research agenda as deputy assistant secretary for planning, research and evaluation in 1969. The next turn in the path, in 1970, brought Dr. Gallagher to the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center as director and Kenan Professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where his work continues (and where I met the right person, him, at the right time, 1986).

It is hard to capture, in a few words, his lifetime of work. Dr. Gallagher’s influence and contributions span so many areas that when, as his graduate student, I would be asked to send someone a copy of his CV I would always have to ask, “Which one?” There was a CV that contained his body-of-work on Educational Policy, another one that addressed his contributions to research on Families and Child Development, and yet a third that contained his works in Gifted Education. Each of these three CVs taken alone represents what would be for most individuals a lifetimes worth of accomplishments and contributions. Yet, Dr. Gallagher’s work while multifaceted has never been fragmented. What themes move across this lifetime of contribution?

Throughout Dr. Gallagher's work we see:

- Attention to issues of poverty, diversity, and equity;
- An understanding that the context of family, culture, and society shape the wellbeing of the individual child;
- A commitment to address seemingly intractable issues through a combination of policy, research, and practice; and
- A striving to understand how to reach and support excellence in all areas of education.

His life's work can perhaps be summarized as a striving for both equity and excellence so that all children can thrive, that is: "*Excellence for All.*"

Just as trying to capture his work is difficult, so is describing his personal contributions. Dr. Gallagher is a scholar with over 150 articles, books and chapters. He is a researcher having directed thousands of studies and projects. He is a pragmatist; spearheading policy & advocacy initiatives and pioneering technical assistance approaches to move research into practice. He is a mentor and teacher; guiding the current generations while sharing his knowledge, wisdom and wit. He is a leader in every sense of the word understanding clearly that the work of today, if done well, will shape the future.

It has been my privilege to work with Dr. Gallagher over the last 24 years. For me Dr. Gallagher is my mentor, colleague, friend, and hero.

The Many Faces of Jim Gallagher: An Educational Catalyst for Positive Change

By Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Ph.D.

My first remembrance of Jim Gallagher in person was in Aspen, Colorado in 1974. He was introduced as one of the gurus in gifted education to a novice group of state plan developers. He clearly lived up to his title, demonstrating a deep understanding of appropriate curriculum for the gifted, and an easy spirit yet challenging attitude toward the serious business at hand. Yet he also loved to have a good time, whether dipping his feet in a mountain stream or playing tennis. He worked hard but also played hard. Of course, I had read his classic text *Teaching the Gifted Child* by that time and was duly impressed with its breadth and depth of treating the topic of giftedness. Little did I know that his influence on my life and work would continue for 35 more years.

The nature of his impact on me may be seen through his capacity to inspire and to model thinking about important issues in the field. I valued his judgment about how to negotiate the shoals of the Illinois State Department of Education when I was a state consultant. I sought his counsel when I moved to Northwestern University as a non-tenure track faculty member. And I have relied on his insights for the past 20 years as I built the Center for Gifted Education at William and Mary. He has always been responsive to my concerns and provided wise counsel at every turn. I consider him an important role model in my development as a professional in this field, however, through his work as well as his personal connection.

Jim has been one of a mere handful of scholars I have encountered in this field who possesses the omnibus traits of giftedness in all of its manifestations. He was a brilliant academician yet also had the political skills to lead major policy efforts in early childhood education, special education, and gifted education. He has conducted important research on instructional approaches successful with the gifted yet also was equally at home with policy research on various topics like middle school education. He can hold his own in the world of Washington and the world of university governance. He has superb administrative skills as seen in his leadership of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center for 18 years at UNC, yet holds teaching as an act of sacred trust.

His capacity to work on behalf of exceptional children at all levels of the enterprise is unrivalled, finding himself equally at home with governors, deans, and legislators as well as students and teachers. His capacity to lead organizations has also been exemplary. As a former president of The National Association of Gifted Children and the World Council for Gifted, he has led others to come together on behalf of gifted learners even as he performed a similar feat as president of The Council for Exceptional Children on behalf of the disabled.

Perhaps his greatest legacy to the field of gifted education has been the influence of his writing, defining what a basic text in gifted education is, the power of his oratory when giving speeches on topics in the field, and the considerable political skills that he used as an advocate for gifted children and their education. His Irish wit, his trademark bushy eyebrows, and his liting laugh all contribute to knowing the man. However, his lifetime of work on behalf of the gifted is his essence, providing the deep insights necessary to keep the field alive and

modeling for others what it takes to be effective in multiple leadership roles.

James Gallagher's Influence on My Work

By Michael Clay Thompson

In the mid-1980s I was suddenly and unexpectedly assigned to teach English to gifted and talented students at a junior high school in western North Carolina. Gifted was a new specialty for me, and I began scrambling to take courses and get certified in G/T. This was difficult because I lived in a remote area near the mountains, and every course required a long drive on twisting two-lane roads. Perhaps because of the silence and isolation of my life, I came to focus on the books I acquired with a special intensity and depth. I began immersing myself in the books, and they changed the way I thought and taught.

From my earliest days as a new teacher in the gifted field, I was particularly inspired by two great voices for rigorous academics in gifted education, Joyce VanTassel-Baska and James Gallagher. Dr. Gallagher's classic in the field, *Teaching the Gifted Child*, was the central source that guided my development. Gallagher's matter-of-fact assumption that academics were central, that the goal of gifted education is that gifted students actually became educated in intellectually critical subjects such as science, mathematics, history, English, and foreign language was a kind of oxygen for me. I could read Gallagher's vision of gifted education, and it would clear my head.

I had never met Dr. Gallagher when I began writing my first book, *The Word Within the Word*, but his powerful vision of gifted education gave me the confidence to write it, to stretch far forward with my goals and my belief in what gifted children could do and wanted to do. I worked on that book for several years, and finally the day came when it was published, and I hurried to the annual conference of the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented, eager to visit the vendor room and see the book in print. Leaving my hotel room, I got on the elevator, and discovered that the only other person in the elevator was James Gallagher. He had no idea who I was. "Good morning," he said, "How are you?" I told him that I was excited because my first book had just been printed, and I was going to the vendor hall to see it. He asked me what it was about.

"Vocabulary," I said, "vocabulary for gifted children." "Well," he said, "let's go see it!" And thus it was that I was escorted to the vendor hall to see my first book in print by Dr. James J. Gallagher, himself. I could not bring myself to tell him that the introduction of the book described his influence on me. His courtesy to me that day became a permanent voice in my conscience, reminding me how a considerate and magnanimous person ought to behave.

As my understanding of the needs of gifted children grew, I became even more influenced by Dr. Gallagher's ideas. In time I found myself hearing his keynotes, attending his sessions, and eventually sitting in meetings with him. There was something different in his words; he had a genius for cutting through the clutter of trends and educational jargon and finding the point at the core. There was an authority in his observations. He put needs in crucial human terms, when many were putting needs in arid and cognitive polysyllables. He looked at abstractions, and saw people. Over and again, I would go to a session or a meeting, thinking that I was up to speed on a topic, only to discover that I had only thought around the edges; Gallagher's assessment of a problem would show me something I had not thought about, at all, and once he said it, it seemed obvious. He showed me that I was not thinking bravely enough or fundamentally enough. I was not keeping my eye on the ball.

During a period of years, I listened to Gallagher talk about how to support gifted education, and he kept insisting that if we are to be successful, we have to have a "seat at the table" when people in power make decisions. I gradually realized that the future of gifted education requires a kind of participation that had never occurred to me, a refusal to remain aloof, a good-faith willingness to volunteer, a venturing forth from the classroom to become part of the decision-making process.

James Gallagher's influence on my work and on my view of gifted children and their needs is profound. He is unique, one of education's great voices, combining research with reality, and all of us are his beneficiaries.



Unthinkable Thoughts

James J. Gallagher

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

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The beginning of a new millennium is an excellent time to take stock and review where we are in this professional field of education of gifted students and where we should be going. One of the ways to engage ourselves is to consider a few unthinkable thoughts, those questions that are so painful for professionals to consider that there is often a conspiracy of silence about them, an unspoken agreement that we would not, as professionals in the field, bring these questions up in polite company (Gallagher, 1984). While it is understandable that we would wish to avoid painful questions, it is not in the best interest of our special field to do so.

This paper is an attempt to confront some major and significant questions regarding the core beliefs within the field of educating gifted students. We will consider four major questions that are indeed unthinkable thoughts to most of us in the education of gifted students, together with what the author believes should be the actions to follow.

First of all, we should recognize that if the answer to question number one is "no," then the rest of the discussions rather meaningless. Similarly, if the answer to question number two is "no," then points three and four lose their meaning. So, it becomes of some significance to confront each of these questions, which have been posed by a variety of critics and friends, in turn.

Is There Such an Entity as a Gifted Child?

The Question

One of the first questions is whether high intelligence is the property of the individual, or merely the favorable confluence of circumstances that allows one youngster to make full use of his or her talents while other youngsters are stunted in their true potential. Renzulli and Reis (1997) prefer, for example, to discuss "gifted behaviors" rather than gifted individuals. Their Schoolwide Enrichment Model is designed to stimulate the problem solving and thinking skills of all students, and they reject

"giftedness as a state of being" (p. 140) instead preferring to use *gifted* as an adjective, rather than a noun.

Critics such as Sapon-Shevin (1996) and Oakes (1985) have made the point that "giftedness" is a *social construct* and not a separate entity of nature. One can be gifted in Sweden, but not in Botswana. Yes, the gifted child is a social construct of the West. But, so are constructs such as "learning disabilities," "social competency," "athletic ability," and so forth. They, too, were all created for some meaningful social or educational purpose. Actually, it is not the social construct aspect of this term that bothers many critics, but whether the social construct is educationally useful or not (Borland, 1997).

Are there youngsters who, at birth, have a neurological constitution that allows them to learn faster, remember more, process information more effectively, and generate more new and unusual ideas than their age peers? These are important features in the information age. There are two major lines of evidence here. The first lies in twin studies and the close relationship of the abilities of adoptive children to the abilities of their natural parents (Plomin, 1997). The studies of identical and fraternal twins clearly indicate a powerful genetic influence in intelligence. Even when identical twins are reared apart (Bouchard, Lykken, McGue, Segal, & Tellegen, 1990), their IQ correlations are in the .70 to .75 range. At the same time, adoption studies also indicate the important role that nurturing plays (Bouchard & McGue, 1981). The second line of evidence for the existence of constitutional giftedness lies in the undeniable presence of prodigies (Morelock & Feldman, 1997), youngsters who do remarkable things before the age of 10 at the level of an adult professional (i.e., an eight-year-old playing competitive chess with adults). Although families play a role in enhancing this early ability it is impossible to assign such remarkable gifts solely to environmental factors (Gallagher & Gallagher, 1994).

So, we can conclude there is evidence to support the following statement: There are some youngsters who are born with the capability to learn faster than others those ideas or concepts that modern societies value in children and adults. Such youngsters and their abilities are subject to many social influences and must interact with their environmental context. Therefore, it often becomes difficult to find students with these special talents in a multicultural society (Baldwin, 1994; Frasier, 1991).

The real objection to the term *gifted* is not that it is a social construct, but that it is a social construct designed with what are perceived as nefarious purposes, in particular, favoring already economically favored children and families. The consequence of this advantage might be suppressing or limiting the capabilities of youngsters from less socially favored circumstances (Margolin, 1996; Oakes & Lipton, 1992). One consequence of the use of intelligence test results in identification is that there is a disproportion in membership in the special programs for gifted students that reflects this "unfairness," with fewer Black and Hispanic students enrolled than their proportions in the population, but also with an excess of Asian students in programs for gifted to their proportions in the population (Gallagher & Gallagher, 1994). Such findings call into question our current procedures and have stimulated a search for alternative identification policies (Frasier, 1997).

One of the major initiatives in the field of gifted education has been attempts to discover and nurture hidden talent (Baldwin, 1994; Patton, 1992). The federal Javits legislation has spurred these efforts. In addition, states like Illinois, Ohio, Texas, North Carolina, and Georgia have made major changes in their identification procedures and policies designed to discover the talented child from cultural backgrounds different from the American mainstream (Coleman, Gallagher, & Foster, 1994).

The obvious gradations in the construct of intelligence and its multiple dimensions in students cause many critics to complain about the "all-or-nothing" aspect of being in "a gifted program" and the unfairness of failing to take into account these gradations of ability or multiple abilities (Pendarvis & Howley, 1996). This objection ignores the fact that many educational decisions are also of a similar all-or nothing nature. You are either on the basketball team or you are not, despite obvious gradations in athletic ability and skill. You are either in a music program at Julliard or you are not, despite obvious gradations in musical talent. You are either accepted into a special school of math and science or you are not, despite gradations in student interest and ability.

Actions Based on Current Knowledge

The process of the identification of gifted students in educational programs was originally for the purpose of establishing eligibility for special programs and obtaining financial reimbursement for local districts

from the state. Now that state reimbursement for local districts has often been placed on the basis of a formula that places a cap on available state resources (e.g., 4% of average daily attendance) rather than on an individual head count of gifted students, the need for such individual identification as a gifted student has been lessened.

We need to establish rules of eligibility for specific advanced programs in content fields that take advantage of the advanced mental abilities and achievement levels of gifted students, such as an advanced math program or a problem based learning unit in social studies, where eligibility could be determined through multiple criteria including aptitude, academic track record, and interest. Eligibility for specific services, programs, or classes has already been established as the pattern at the secondary level in Advanced Placement courses and Honors programs where eligibility standards may include general intellectual aptitude as one of a number of admission criteria. This multiple selection criteria also fits well into Howard Gardner's (Ramos-Ford & Gardner, 1997) multiple intelligences framework in that high math aptitude can place a student in the advanced math program, but not necessarily make him or her eligible for a special creative arts programs.

Is There Such an Entity as Gifted Education?

The Question

What is the special character of programs for gifted students? Are they exciting? Yes. Are they boring and trivial? Yes. Do they discriminate against minorities? Yes. Do they fight discrimination? Yes. The truth of the matter is that any statement made about programs or services for gifted students (or anyone else) in this diverse country is partially true. What we really need to focus upon is how much truth there is in particular claims and what can be done to make the programs more positive in nature.

Are there identifiable special or differentiated programs for gifted students? The answer to this question is not nearly so clear, nor is the nature of differentiation. Differentiation can refer to changes from the basic curriculum in *content*, in *skills*, in *learning environments*, and even in *technology*. Is our differentiated program based upon content (history or math), or upon special skills (problem solving or

creativity)? Surely it is not sufficient to refer to the geographic place where gifted students are (resource room, regular class, special class, etc.) as the differentiation. Presumably they are in a special place to allow for something different and distinctive to happen in the curriculum. If they sit in a different place but are given the same inappropriate curriculum as they would confront in the general classroom, why should we expect that anything of educational importance will happen (Kulik & Kulik, 1997)?

Is a differential program actually needed? The voices of the gifted students themselves provide persuasive testimony. More than 800 gifted students from nine separate school districts in North Carolina were asked to comment on whether they were being challenged by their current content courses in mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts (Gallagher, Harradine, & Coleman, 1997). Only mathematics and their special classes in gifted education were able to get over 50% approval in this regard. Student comments focused on the redundancy of the curriculum and the low level of thought required, which then triggered many statements of student boredom.

In his critique of gifted education, Margolin (1996) does not believe that the program focus is *content*, stating that a review of gifted textbooks revealed only 11% of the pages in the textbooks are concerned with the content of the lessons. The examples of trivial and irrelevant lessons presented by Margolin, as well as Sawyer (1988), on what goes on in gifted classes leaves one to wonder what parents in their right minds would want their child in such a program. Margolin's view is that it is not the content of the lessons that is important, but the privilege and status of the term *gifted* that drives parents to insist that their child be provided with these services or programs (and this label!).

Is it high-level thinking processes that we wish to cultivate that comprises the differentiated program? As Callahan (1996) has pointed out, this goal seems to presume that the regular classroom teacher is not concerned with the stimulation of thinking skills of her students, an obvious misrepresentation. It is certainly true that the development of thinking skills, such as problem solving, problem finding, and creativity, often play a significant role in what is "differentiated" (Treffinger & Feldhusen, 1996).

Sapon-Shevin (1996) has a different reason for attacking gifted education. It is not that it is bad

education, but that it is so good! "The benefits provided by such programs-smaller classes, more enthusiastic teachers, a rich curriculum, more individualization-are all changes that would benefit all students" (p. 199). By providing that type of program to the children of the wealthy and the well-positioned in our society, Sapon-Shevin believes that we increase the gap between gifted students and the economically disadvantaged students. So, education for the gifted becomes, to her, a device to maintain these unfair cultural advantages.

We can hardly deny that there are some parents who would be willing to see the public education ship sink if their children were provided the lifeboats of a gifted program, but, to claim that this is the primary reason why thousands of parents and teachers support and work in programs for gifted students is to be extremely naive. Nevertheless, we still have the responsibility to state clearly just what we are about when we say we are "differentiating" the program for gifted students, in addition to what outcomes we expect and what outcomes we have obtained (Gallagher, 1998).

One of the important questions to raise in education of gifted students-and in all of education-is, "Are the practices that we are using beneficial, or do they just represent established practice that, through repetition, becomes the established way of doing things?" Shore and his colleagues (Shore, Cornell, Robinson, & Ward, 1991) produced a volume on *Recommended Practices in Gifted Education: A Critical Analysis* that identified 101 widely advocated practices for educating gifted students. They also did a detailed literature review to indicate which of these had research backing and which did not. As a follow-up on this effort, Shore and Delcourt (1996) included more recent studies in their analysis and reached the following conclusion (summarized in Table 1) about effective education programs. Table 1 represents those policies that research indicates result in more favorable outcomes for gifted students. Although some of these (grouping, acceleration, high-level content) would seem to apply particularly to gifted students, such things as well-trained teachers, thinking processes, and microcomputers would seem to be beneficial for all students. These practices include elements of changing learning environments, content, and skills, supporting the goal of curriculum differentiation.

One of the mistakes we have made in the past has been to treat the broad spectrum of giftedness as one entity in our programming or service design. There is

Uniquely Appropriate for Gifted Education	Effective with Gifted and General
Acceleration	Enrichment
Career education (girls)	Inquiry, discovery, problem solving, and creativity
Ability grouping	Professional end products as standards
High level curriculum	Microcomputers
Differential Programming	

Note: From "Effective curricular and program practices in gifted education and the interface with general education,") by B. Shore & M. Delcourt, 1996, Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 20, pp. 138-154. Copyright 1996 by Prufrock Press. Adapted with permission.

good reason to believe that the far high end of the distribution of intelligence requires something different than what is provided for the gifted students who are merely somewhat superior in learning ability to the average student. If we can speak of the "highly gifted," then I believe these rare students (perhaps less than 1% of the total) should be the instructional responsibility of the specialist in gifted education, rather than the general education teacher. The distance between these quite special youngsters and the average student of the same chronological age now becomes too great for the regular teacher to fold this student into the general curriculum. Whereas the "run-of-the-mill" gifted student may be dealt with by the support system we have described here, the highly gifted student needs more individual attention, perhaps by providing tutoring, acceleration, or planning individualized studies and projects.

Actions Based on Current Knowledge

The critiques leveled against the triviality and irrelevance of some of our "differentiated" programs for gifted students need to be taken seriously. General education teachers and teachers of gifted students both need models of differentiated units that stress advanced content *and* mastery of thinking processes, such as those developed by VanTassel-Baska (1997) in science and Gallagher and Stepien (1998) in social studies (see also Stepien & Gallagher, 1993), to help them challenge their students. The movement toward establishing content standards in general education requires the specialists in gifted education to add to these *standards* what would be *standards plus* that would represent differentiated content for gifted students.

For example, the National Science Education Standards (Klausner, 1996) propose that, in life science in grades 5-8, "all students should develop understanding of structure and function in living systems, reproduction and heredity, regulation and behavior, populations and ecosystems and diversity and adaptations of organisms" (p. 155). Within those broad areas there are many opportunities for scientific inquiry and individual or group projects to challenge gifted students beyond the level expected of all students. This would require a consistent application of a type of *curriculum compacting* (Reis & Renzulli, 1992) so that gifted students could demonstrate that they have met the general standards for their grade level and would then either address the standards for advanced grades or become involved in genuine enrichment adventures *based upon the general course curriculum*.

This does not mean that there should not also be continued attention given to special efforts at enhancing creativity, problem solving, problem-based learning, and the like (Treffinger & Feldhusen, 1996), but that the mastery of these skills has to relate to significant and relevant content in order to be meaningful and useful to the student.

Is There Such an Entity as Special Personnel Preparation for Teachers of Gifted Students?

The Question

One of the most often-presented strategies for educational improvement for gifted students is sophisticated personnel preparation where teachers and leadership personnel, who will be dealing with children who are gifted and talented, are given special preparation for presenting and organizing services and curriculum for these students. It is this preparation that creates the "specialist," since this preparation is most often applied on top of some general education certification at the elementary, middle, or secondary level. The unthinkable thought is that such preparation is often haphazard and superficial, consisting of a summer workshop here, a three day conference there, hardly justifying the term *specialist*. Although rules have been suggested for extended educational experience in this area (Parker, 1996; Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 1995), most of the state standards expect the teacher to be learning about the characteristics of gifted students, differentiating curriculum for such students,

studying about intelligence and higher thinking processes, plus a supervised practicum. Whatever additional preparation the teacher of gifted students is able to find is too often strictly on her or his own (Feldhusen, 1997).

Let us first consider our role as "specialist" in the field of education. We need to answer the question: What can we do that others in education cannot, for is that not the definition of a specialist? If we are psychologists, we can give tests that no other professional can do. If we are pediatricians, we can prescribe medicine when other professionals cannot. If we are teachers of children who are deaf, we can teach American Sign Language. Or, if we are teachers of children with visual impairments, we can teach travel training and Braille. Each of these skills is more or less unique and distinguishes the specialist. Our specialty appears to rest in our energizing thinking skills and strategies for differentiating curriculum.

When we ask *where* these specialists are being prepared in gifted education, we get a discouraging diversity of experiences from higher education courses, to workshops, to staff development, to conference participation. It is this kind of haphazard record of personnel preparation that has motivated, in part, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to question the actual presence of a "specialty" of gifted education (J. Kelly, personal communication, 1996).

Actions Based on Current Knowledge

We need to take the critique of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards seriously when they raise doubts about the legitimate existence of a teaching specialization in gifted education. We need to be clear on what the special knowledge and skills are that are needed by such specialists (Baldwin, 1994; Feldhusen, 1997; Gallagher & Gallagher, 1994; Parker, 1987; VanTassel-Baska, 1997).

Certainly, this specialist must have the skills to develop differentiated lessons and units that stress complex ideas and conceptual systems, and that means the specialist should have content sophistication in some content area or areas (e.g., history, math, economics, etc.). She or he should have extensive knowledge of the various ways to access information sources so that the students can search effectively for a wide range of information on their projects. He or she should also have a fundamental grasp of higher thinking processes and

how these can be utilized in instruction, be able to collaborate with general education teachers in enriching the program for advanced students in the general classroom, and, finally, be able to do some individual mentoring for those extraordinary students who are clearly three or more grades in advance of their age group.

So, the key questions are, where will this personnel preparation take place and under whose guidance? Although a few higher education centers have established some basis for such training, most of this preparation will have to be executed in organized staff development programs at a state and local level. An example of this approach is illustrated in the module strategy designed by Harrison, Coleman, and Howard (1994), who transformed the North Carolina certification standards into a state-approved series of 10-hour modules that can be delivered at the local level by university and experienced school system personnel. By assembling these modules, the teachers can eventually earn certification in gifted education.

It should be the task of leaders in state departments of education and professional associations such as TAG and NAGC to set standards and help organize systematic and sequential experiences for on-the-line teachers. The Association for the Gifted (TAG) has tried to develop a statement on what teachers of students with gifts and talents should know (What Every Special Educator Must Know, CEC, 1995), and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) has developed potential standards for graduate education, as well (Parker, 1996). Nevertheless, it will take a major effort on the part of the professional community to design and, in some fashion; produce a personnel preparation package that can be delivered at a local or regional level by qualified personnel that would lead to a form of advanced certification for teachers of gifted students.

Is the Application of Special Services for Gifted Students Sufficient in Scope and Intensity to Make a Difference in the Classroom?

The Question

There has been a relatively widespread practice in programs that provide special services for gifted students to set aside some instructional time for the student to interact with a specially trained teacher. While that could mean a couple of half-days a week, or an hour a day, it very often, in local systems,

means less (i.e., merely an hour to an hour and a half per week) in some instances.

What can a teacher do in that hour and a half per week (probably broken into two 45 minute blocks) that can make up for 23-1/2 hours per week spent in a regular program with a curriculum that may not be appropriate for the student's needs? Should they ask the students to read a special book? How about a library project that lasts for a month (that would be six hours worth)? Why do we put up with such obviously nonfunctional educational adjustments? Such assignments are "justified" in terms of limited budgets and an attempt by harried educational administrators to stretch available resources to the limit. Although one can have sympathy for the hardpressed administrator, such limited time allocations come perilously close to educational fraud. In essence, we are promising something we cannot deliver.

Consider the following scenario in the field of medicine. A doctor prescribes 50 mg of cortisone for a student with asthma attacks. The pharmacist notes that there are many students needing asthma medicine and he is running short of cortisone, so he regretfully gives the student a 5 mg pill instead of the 50 mg pill the doctor prescribed. Would the doctor passively shrug his shoulders and say, "Well, that's the way it goes," or would you likely hear a roar of outrage that the doctor's patient was being given a *non-therapeutic dosage* contrary to his or her professional instructions?

Well, we are the doctors of education, quite literally. Should our answer be, "Well, what can you do?" or "That's the way it goes," or should we speak out against a practice, a *non-therapeutic educational dosage*, that no one can really defend as good education for gifted students, but that many of us tolerate through our silence? Should not guidelines be created for what is the minimum amount of contact time that one needs for any expected gain or benefit?

The answer of our specialists in gifted education often comes back: "Well, we agree this short-changing of students is terrible, but what can just one person do about such policies as the 'hour-a-week' gifted program?" Well, this one person often belongs to a large professional organization, and collectively such groups could at least consider setting minimal standards in terms of sheer contact time. Then, we could suggest such standards as necessary to get the TAG or NAG Seal of Approval. Anything less than that minimum time commitment would be considered

unprofessional. If such standards were presented in journals, such as *Parenting for High Potential*, the parents of gifted students might be interested in them. There is a similar issue related to the amount of time that a specialist in gifted education can provide to the general education classroom teacher. The growing popularity of the policy of *inclusion* for gifted students in the regular classroom has been supported on the grounds that a gifted specialist can come into that classroom and provide some extra activities for gifted students, or for cluster groups of high-ability students. But, how much time should that specialist spend in any one classroom? Is one hour every two weeks sufficient to get some sort of meaningful gain or improvement? Maybe an hour a week?

Again, most of the policies that determine the time available for the interaction of general education teachers and specialists in gifted education are driven by economics rather than good educational practice or theory. The question is, do we collectively have an obligation to say something about these practices? Are there minimum time standards that we are ready to defend as proper professional behavior? If we do not stand up to the economic arguments of the "bottom line," then who will? Is this minimal use of special consultants just another case of educational fraud about which we stand silent? Why do we not say so?

Actions Based on Current Knowledge

This final issue calls for establishment of, and publicity for, some minimum standards of time commitments to services for gifted students. For example, can anyone accept less than three hours per week of direct contact with a specialist as a minimum for a viable program for gifted students? Anyone making such an argument should be asked, at least, to provide some tangible evidence of the attainments of gifted students under such questionable circumstances. The minimum standard might include no less than five hours per week with a support person in general education classrooms (this time would include consultation with the classroom teacher, direct work with cluster groups within the classroom, resource room activities, and individual work with extremely gifted students).

Such standards would avoid the predictable assignment of specialists in gifted education to multiple school buildings and schedule that results in minimal contact with students or teachers in any one place. Such an exercise in negative educational

economic scan result in another set of "ghost programs," the "non-therapeutic dose" where parents are told something constructive is happening for their child that cannot possibly happen, given the limited time and availability of educators of gifted students.

Status quo as Option?

Whatever the personal reaction of the readers to these "unthinkable thoughts" and the accompanying suggestions for action, there should be little hesitation in agreeing that the *status quo* is not a viable option. We need to organize ourselves for significant changes in how we deal with the painful issues described above and perhaps many more. In the 21st century, we should be able to say proudly that we saw our limitations and took action against them. Much of this action must be done collectively since we, as individuals, are hardly able to make major institutional changes. It is unlikely that higher education, awash with many other issues, will take the lead here. It is clearly the responsibility of our professional associations to take the leadership on these issues. *The truly unthinkable thought is that we would continue to go on the way we have been without some recognition of the need for change.*

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Portraits in Gifted Education: The Legacy Series

A Dialogue with
James Gallagher

Friday, November 6, 2009
4:00 to 5:30 PM
Room 220
Convention Center

Reader's Corner Book Reviews and Books of Interest

Josh Waitzkin will be giving the Opening Keynote at the NAGC Annual Convention in St. Louis, Missouri

The Art of Learning: A Journey in the Pursuit of Excellence
Josh Waitzkin, Author
(2007) Free Press.
ISBN: 0743277457

A Review by: Sarah E. Carlin & Derek M. LaRosa
Educational Studies Department
Knox College

Josh Waitzkin, the subject of the film *Searching for Bobby Fisher*, explores how to learn successfully and achieve tangible accomplishments in *The Art of Learning: A Journey in the Pursuit of Excellence*. Waitzkin tells the story of his chess years, and his subsequent mastery of martial arts. His experiences inform his theories about the art of learning. Waitzkin divides the book into three sections, *Early Chess*, *Martial Arts*, and *Bringing It All Together*. *The Art of Learning* provides a valuable discussion about the nature of talent development that would benefit teachers, administrators, and parents as well as providing exemplars of giftedness for older gifted children. Two major themes arise in Waitzkin's discussion of his experiences as an exceptional individual. These two themes are the focus of this review.

Learning and the Gifted Child

The first major theme involves Waitzkin's beliefs about learning. Waitzkin has been influenced by Carol Dweck's research in the field of developmental psychology, work that transformed his view of how learning is best approached. Waitzkin shares Dweck's belief that there are at least two separate implicit theories of intelligence—entity or fixed and incremental or growth. Entity theorists believe that intelligence is unchangeable, that certain individuals are “smart” at something and do not work to achieve that intelligence. Instead, a given level of intelligence is present in individuals from birth. Incremental theorists believe that intelligence is malleable, and that certain people learn more because they work

hard at something. Because accomplishments derived through hard work are achieved, instead of just assumed, intelligence grows as someone works hard at something over time. Theorists who take the incremental view recognize that many children can achieve successful results by just working harder. Children that develop this type of learning strategy have normally been told comments such as, “You got an ‘A’ on that test because you studied so hard,” or, “You’re getting these problems wrong because you’re not practicing enough.” A person who accepts an incremental theory of intelligence realizes that difficult tasks can be mastered by continually building on previous knowledge and through working methodically toward the final goal. Persons adopting this approach are more likely to persevere through failures and reach their final goals than those adopting an entity approach to intelligence.

For those who take an entity approach, intelligence is a more fragile construct, and one that is more likely to break students' confidence. For example, if students struggle with an assignment or in a class, they often believe they are not smart enough to succeed. Individuals adopting an entity theory approach to problems normally were influenced to think this way early on in their lives. Somewhere along the line, someone—be it a parent, a teacher, or a mentor—explained to them that they just don't “get” math, meaning it is not an area of strength for them, or that they are the “best” at reading, indicating that these are the skills that should be pursued. As children, individuals who adopt an entity approach develop a false sense of what their individual strengths and weaknesses are, and link these to an inherited and already present entity in their mind. This approach is detrimental because children then feel that their level of skill in a certain discipline is invariable and permanent. They are less apt to realize that they can build on their knowledge. They get frustrated more easily, and tend to give up on tasks that they feel are too difficult.

Waitzkin greatly favors the incremental approach to understanding intelligence, and based his entire book on this approach. Waitzkin provides an analysis of the art of learning and provides numerous examples and vignettes that explain his views on how subjects are learned to the point of mastery. His approach always favors working one's way up through the system, first serving as an apprentice and becoming more skilled over time, as opposed to operating under the impediment of a set level of ability that cannot be overcome. This information is very useful for the parents and teachers of gifted students, as well as the

children themselves. The emphasis upon the value of hard work, and the process of attaining mastery, provides a powerful exemplar for gifted children who are establishing their own relationship with their talents.

Mastery and Accomplishment

With the chapter “Making Smaller Circles,” Waitzkin explores the idea of *success* as resulting from concentrating on the details of a problem and mastering them revealing the second major theme, mastery and accomplishment. This notion of mastering details is the concept from which the metaphor of making smaller circles originates. By mastering a detail, or making a very small circle, a child begins to learn, and through continuously making other related small circles, eventually master something, be it a skill, a body of knowledge, or another task. Waitzkin returns to this concept repeatedly throughout the book, and it is expanded upon in sections where he discusses creating a mental zone where one can recuperate and be ready to face challenges.

Waitzkin feels that many try to process too much information at one time and have too many simultaneous involvements to properly comprehend the issues that occur in their lives. Put differently, Waitzkin feels that too many of us are always looking for something different or new to keep us entertained and occupied. Making smaller circles involves exploring more deeply those simple life occurrences that are often overlooked. Focusing on mastery and paying close attention to detail results in better learning.

Waitzkin provides examples from both his martial arts and chess training to support his beliefs about talent development. When practicing *Tai Chi Chuan*, Waitzkin would frequently spend hours moving a hand out several inches, and then releasing it back. He would capture the elegance and intricacies of simple movements as he perfected them. By doing this, Waitzkin built a strong base and was able to translate it to a more complex level of *Tai Chi*. The same fundamentals are required for mastery of chess, and Waitzkin believes the key to his success was his recognition of that.

In his earlier study of chess, Waitzkin studied endgame positions as simple as a king against the other king and a pawn—mastering principles with just three pieces. He thus used empty space, tempo,

and planning to assist his transfer of those concepts to complicated and crowded situations. Waitzkin believes his eminence in chess tournaments came from his earlier mastery of fundamentals.

Waitzkin cites Mike Tyson and Muhammed Ali as examples of his beliefs. Because both painstakingly and intricately practiced their skills over time, over time they were able to incrementally reduce movements while maintaining feeling and strength. Through practice and refinement of the motion—mastering the feeling—they could throw a powerful punch without having to wind-up, coil at the hips, or even fully extend their arms. As a result, they were able to produce, as Waitzkin puts it, knockouts that looked completely unrealistic. Their hits were so practiced, so refined, that the untrained eye often could not recognize the quality of the punch thrown.

Waitzkin’s book is highly recommended, and valuable for a diverse audience. Parents, administrators, and teachers can find a variety of approaches that might assist the gifted children with whom they work. Gifted children themselves also would benefit from reading Waitzkin’s book, as it provides an accessible and entertaining exemplar of how one gifted child achieved eminence in several domains.



~ photo by Melissa Mesko

*When I grow up I want to be a
little boy.
~ Joseph Heller, Author*

Multiple Intelligences in Action: Undergraduate Perspectives on Gardner

Stephen T. Schroth, Jason A. Helfer, Diana L. Beck,
Daniel O. Gonshorek, Ashley N. Witzke, Eileen I.
O'Brien, Carly R. Kauffman, Derek M. LaRosa,
Sarah E. Carlin & Michael D. Dooley

Educational Studies Department
Knox College

*Howard Gardner will be giving the Saturday Keynote
at the NAGC Annual Convention in St. Louis, Missouri*

When dealing with many aspects of pre-service teacher preparation—including topics such as higher-order thinking skills, differentiated instruction, and assessment—Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences serves as a comprehensible and accessible introduction. Gardner suggests that traditional definitions of intelligence are limited insofar that they fail to recognize the multiplicity of talents and that by extending those to include other more specific manifestations of intelligence such as verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, bodily/kinesthetic, visual/spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential.

Verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligences are those that are traditionally valued by schools, represented by strong reading, writing, analytical, numeracy, and reasoning skills. Bodily/kinesthetic intelligence refers to those who incorporate movement and hands-on experiences into learning, while visual/spatial learners are typically very good at mentally visualizing and manipulating objects. Learners who are musically intelligent display great sensitivity to rhythms, sounds, tones, music, and other auditory stimuli. Interpersonal and intrapersonal learners are those who exhibit high degrees of sensitivity to the moods, motivations, temperaments, and feelings of others or themselves. Naturalistic intelligence encompasses those with great sensitivity to nature and the ability to nurture and grow things, while existential learners display a high degree of skill in reflecting on philosophical questions about life, death, and ultimate realities. Below we shall set forth some of the ways in which undergraduate pre-service teacher candidates encounter, and grapple with, Gardner as they make sense of multiple intelligences and work to use these

to inform their classroom practices, both before, during, and after student teaching.

Teaching Gardner to Undergraduates

Introducing the theory of multiple intelligences challenges undergraduate students, either those just new to an education program or those who will be student teaching soon. The beneficial reasons for this challenge are several. Too often schools operate on a deficiency model, where teachers and administrators focus on what students cannot do and try to "fix" them. As the theory of multiple intelligences examines conceptions of talent, ability, and performance, it is often introduced in an educational psychology or human development course taken early in an undergraduate education sequence. The theory of multiple intelligences is introduced early because Gardner opens up a whole new way of looking at students and defining "achievement." Rather than concentrating solely on what students cannot do, a multiple intelligences approach also explores those areas where students exhibit strength and interest. Schools that emphasize nurturing ability and sustaining the whole child provide an ideal setting for such an approach. Instead of rewarding just those children who achieve in traditional areas (e.g., verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical), the theory of multiple intelligences asks teachers and students to identify individual areas of accomplishment and potential needs. Each student possesses all nine intelligences, although one or more is usually dominant. By appreciating his or her own learning profile, each student becomes more accepting of classmates who may struggle in certain areas. When developing a community of learners this is key, as students become more willing to assist others as they understand that they too have areas where they are not as strong. Similarly, as teacher candidates become more appreciative of their own strengths and weaknesses they become more understanding of those of the students they serve. This awareness allows teachers to better modify and differentiate instruction to best meet the needs of learners.

Knox teacher candidates work with this material at three distinct stages during their preparation—at the foundational stage during an Educational Psychology course, while in their methods sequence as they learn how to plan and implement instruction, and as student teachers when they put theory into practice. The theory of multiple intelligences serves to motivate their work to develop lessons that incorporate several of the intelligences. With recent

groups, more attention has been given to naturalistic and interpersonal intelligence than with groups we have worked with in the past, which is rewarding and exciting.

Undergraduates' First Encounters with Gardner

As a recently-declared teacher candidate, exposure to Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences has had a beneficial and substantial impact upon the way in which I view the objectives and methodology associated with the teaching profession. The main objective in teaching ought to be the identification and incremental development of individual student strengths, and Gardner's theory adequately accommodates for this essential component of pedagogy. Having experienced much personal difficulty myself as a result of not having my perspectives appreciated or validated, I grasp the detrimental effects created by a school system which overwhelmingly favors teacher-pleasing behaviors and traditional student-learner profiles that focus only upon certain types of intelligence.

Gardner facilitates the recognition that nurturing every student's inherent multipotentiality to excel in various arenas is imperative in the classroom. It is just as important for educators to focus upon the classification of the talents and strengths their students possess as it is for them to identify those areas in which their students might require remedial assistance. For these reasons, the inclusion of Multiple Intelligences in pre-service teacher preparatory curriculum provides the foundation for a beneficial model of sound pedagogical practice. The emphasis placed upon the appreciation of one's own learning profile on the part of both student and teacher is another highly-beneficial aspect of Gardner's theory. When thinking about differentiating instruction, for instance, student understanding that learning profile differences exist makes acceptance of tiered lessons much easier. This emphasis can greatly assist in the development and fostering of cooperation and a sense of community within the classroom.

Undergraduates' Work with Children and In-Service Teachers

During student teaching, I found Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences useful in crafting and implementing lessons. When exploring literature, for example, I allowed students to demonstrate their understanding of character motivation through art

rather than simply using paper-and-pencil activities. In so doing, I was able to find student strengths that would otherwise be overlooked. My perspective was also influenced by the theory of multiple intelligences, permitting a fuller and better understanding of the disciplines I taught. When working with students on mapping skills, for instance, I allowed students to use a spatial rendering of the map. As a result, the students gained a greater appreciation of the inherent biases of all maps that both reflect and shape the belief systems of the viewer. When working with students I found Gardner is not just about helping students who would otherwise struggle, but instead helped me to focus on providing a richer and more valuable experience for all learners.

Knox teacher candidates also have the opportunity to work with teachers from various parts of the globe, including China and the Navajo Nation. When a group of Knox teacher candidates worked over the summer with a group of Navajo teachers, it quickly became clear that the multiple intelligences were not something that they had studied before. Despite this, they made quick sense of how the theory of multiple intelligences could inform their practice once presented with the concept. For example, Pauline, a third and fourth grade teacher with whom we were working, noted that although she had not seen Gardner's multiple intelligences previously, it made inherent sense to her that some students would be stronger in some areas than others. For Pauline, learning Gardner's multiple intelligences simply allowed for enhanced articulation of the prism through which the students' intelligence in different areas could be recognized. In this way Gardner's work greatly assists teachers at any level to challenge their conceptions of talent and to broaden those students provided gifted education services.

Conclusion

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences provides a remarkable tool to pre-service teachers at any level. As these teacher candidates mature in their practice, however, the value of exposure to Gardner subtly changes. For this reason it is important to introduce Gardner early and to refer to him often, as such exposure matches beginning teacher needs and developmental phases. Deep and meaningful understanding of Gardner greatly assists later stages, such as differentiating instruction and assessment strategies that more mature teachers engage in on a daily basis.

NAGC 2009 Conceptual Foundations General Session Offerings

Friday, November 6th

Paying Attention to the Non-Asset Side of Giftedness: A Conceptual Shift		
Jean Peterson and Mariam Willis	10:30 - 11:30 AM	265
AP From Early College Credit to Advanced High School Curriculum: Alignment with Gifted Education?		
Shelagh Gallagher	10:30 - 11:30 AM	224
Move Over, Galton! Hidden, Surprising 19th Century Sources for Conceptions of Giftedness		
Kathi Kearney	10:30 - 11:30 AM	104
Families' Experiences Raising Highly/Profoundly Gifted Children		
Robert Schultz	11:45 – 12:30 PM	104
The Inclusion Dilemma: Gifted Education Gone Awry		
James Delisle	1:30 – 2:30 PM	224
The Power of Beliefs		
Erin Morris Miller	1:30 – 2:30 PM	265
Conceptual Challenges to Measuring the Full Range of Giftedness		
Barbara Gilman, Linda Silverman, and Kathi Kearney	1:30 – 2:30 PM	104
Essential Components of Effective Policy: Examples from One Case Study		
E. Wayne Lord and Julie Swanson	2:45 – 3:45 PM	276
Does the Fractured, Contested, Porous Field of Gifted Education Benefit From Cognitive Diversity?		
Don Ambrose, Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Tracy Cross and Laurence Coleman	2:45 – 3:45 PM	224
New perspectives on diversity: Applications of critical theory		
Reva Friedman-Nimz and Nicole S. Horn	2:45 – 3:45 PM	265
Out of The Parking Lot: Ten Things You Can't Say in Gifted Education		
Susan Rakow	4:30 - 5:30	265
Cost-Effectiveness Analysis: Underachievement from the Gifted Learners' Perspective		
Valija Rose	4:30 – 5:30	224

NAGC 2009 Conceptual Foundations General Session Offerings			
Saturday, November 7th	The Stereotyped Gifted: History, Endorsement, and Intervention		
	Kevin O'Connor	10:00 – 11:00 AM	265
	Media Portrayal of Gifted Adolescents and Young Adults: Myth or Reality?		
	Felicia Dixon	11:15 – 12:15 PM	275
	Equity and Excellence In A Theory-Based Identification System		
	Joseph Renzulli	11:15 – 12:15 PM	Majestic E
	Panel Honoring Dr. Joyce VanTasselbaska's Contributions to Gifted Education		
	Kyung Hee Kim, Tamra Stambaugh, Bronwyn MacFarlane, Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, Bonnie Cramond, and James Gallagher	11:15 – 12:15 PM	102
	Gifted Education Activism in Recessionary Times		
	Terence Friedrichs	1:45-2:45 PM	265
Response to Intervention and the Autonomous Learner Model: Gateway to Opportunity!			
Robin Carey and George Betts	3:00-4:00 PM	275	
Our Moral Imperative: The Ethics of Leadership in Gifted Education			
Julie Lenner McDonald and Todd Kettler	3:00-4:00 PM	265	
Sunday, November 8th			
WHAT DOESN'T KILL US MAKES US STRONGER: Beyond Gender/Implications for Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration			
Alena Treat	8:45 – 9:45 AM	242	

NAGC 2009 Conceptual Foundations Poster Session Offerings			
Friday November 6th	A New Twist for Gifted Education: The Mobius Response Model		
	Joanne Foster and Dona Matthews	7:30 - 8:30 AM	Plaza Lobby
	A Million Words Later: Practical Ideas Distilled from The Encyclopedia of Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent		
	Barbara Kerr, Reva Friedman-Nimz and Janette Michaels	7:30 - 8:30 AM	Plaza Lobby
	Why Gifted Education Exists: Theoretical and Research-Based Justifications		
	Stephen Schroth, Jason Helfer, and Daniel Gonshorek	10:30 - 11:30 AM	Plaza Lobby
Saturday November 7th	Testing Tyranny: The Under-Identification and Under-Service of Gifted Students		
	Dov Liberman, John Gaa, and Rick Olenchak	10:30 - 11:30 AM	Plaza Lobby
	Gifted Education: A Concept Web		
	Jill Olthouse	2:45-3:45 PM	Plaza Lobby
	A Balancing Act: Social Coping, Academic Self-Concept, and Attitudes About School in Gifted Students		
	Rebecca Landis, Katherine Brown, and Elizabeth Connell	11:15 - 12:15 PM	Plaza Lobby
Saturday November 7th	Widened conceptions of Giftedness : The Singapore Perspective		
	Letchmi Ponnusamy	1:45 - 2:45 PM	Plaza Lobby
	The Role of Axiology in Gifted Education		
	Jason Helfer and Stephen Schroth	1:45 - 2:45 PM	Plaza Lobby

<u>Thursday, November 5, 2009</u>	Conceptual Foundations Work Session 7:00PM – 9:00PM Majestic A (Renaissance)
<u>Friday, November 6, 2009</u>	Conceptual Foundations Business Meeting 12:15PM – 1:15PM Room 230 Convention Center

NETWORK OFFICERS

Chair:

Robert Schultz
The University of Toledo
2801 W. Bancroft St.
Toledo, OH 43606
(419) 530-2469
(419) 530-2466 FAX
robert.schultz@utoledo.edu

Chair Elect & Membership Chair:

Elizabeth A. Romey
College of Education
University of South Alabama
UCOM 3115
Mobile, AL 36688
251-380-2723

Program Chair:

Kathi Kearney
Project Excel Teacher
Noble VI/Berwick V Schools
Berwick, ME 03901
&
Professional Associate
Gifted Development Center
1452 Marion St
Denver, CO 80218
KKearney@midcoast.com

Program Committee:

Cheryl Ackerman
University of Delaware
107 Pearson Hall
Newark, DE 19716
cmackerman@excite.com

Barbara A. Romey
Program Coordinator
Gifted Education 9-12
Phenix City Schools
Phenix City, AL 36868

Past Chair and Treasurer:

Abbey Block Cash
377 Woodward Rd.
Nassau, New York 12123
(518) 766-7665
Acash@berk.com

Newsletter Editor:

Erin Morris Miller
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
millerem@jmu.edu

Assistant Newsletter Editor:

Stephen T. Schroth
Educational Studies Department
Knox College
2 East South Street, K126
Galesburg, IL 61401
sschroth@knox.edu
(309) 341-7347

Secretary:

Barbara A. Romey
Program Coordinator
Gifted Education 9-12
Phenix City Schools
Phenix City, AL 36868

Publications & Annotated Bibliography:

Don Ambrose
849 Sandy Run Road
Yardley, PA 19067
ambrose@rider.edu

Nora Cohen
School of Education
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331
cohen1@orst.edu

Archivist/Historian:

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Website:

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Our Next Issue
Send Manuscripts to:

Erin Morris Miller
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
millerem@jmu.edu

or

Stephen T. Schroth
Educational Studies Department
Knox College
2 East South Street, K126
Galesburg, IL 61401
sschroth@knox.edu

