

Newsletter

The Leading Edge

FOR GIFTED EDUCATION IN B.C.

The Association of the
Educators for the Gifted,
Talented and Creative
Children of B.C.

B.C.T.F.



Volume 27

Winter 2009/10

President's Message

Where Have All The Gifted Gone?

Well not **ALL** of the gifted. (Presidents of PSA's should always avoid the use of hyperbole)

– but **49% of them!**

Congratulations, BC public schools! We have somehow managed to lose, misplace, or deny the existence of 8930 gifted students in this province.

According to data from the Ministry of Education...

- In 2000, school districts in B.C. reported having 18,322 gifted students.
- In 2009, school districts in B.C. reported having 9392 gifted students.
- Net loss: 8930 children

In fact, we have some school districts that apparently don't have **ANY** gifted students. The problem really began in 2002, when the province decided to stop earmarking special education dollars. According to Education Minister Shirley Bond, that gave boards the "flexibility" to "best meet the needs of their students". It also clearly gave them the "flexibility" to deny the very existence of gifted students.

The most elitist thing we can do in public schools is abolish programs for gifted students. We are penalizing the gifted poor, because the gifted rich can afford alternatives. Gifted programming is an equity issue. Affluent families can send their children to private schools. Well-educated parents can home-school. Gifted students from poor families are depending on the public school system to get the help they need.

If you are ever curious about the position of private schools on "giftedness" check out their site at "ourkids.net".

" Gifted students fare much better in private schools, where their needs can be better met. Gifted students are likely to be bored

and under-stimulated in a public school where they are under-appreciated and do not get the attention they should get. In a private school, smaller classrooms and more attentive, better-trained teachers can make a world of difference to gifted children. Having your gifted child in a private school should be part of your long term plan for providing your child with the best education he or she can receive so that he or she can fully explored his or her giftedness."

What more can I say?!?!?

In challenging economic times, "gifted" is just not a popular exceptionality. Call me cynical, but I have a nagging suspicion that some school districts could be using the economic crisis as an excuse to cut services to gifted students. After all, who can argue with lack of funding? No one has to get into a philosophical discussion when money is tight. No one has to admit that they do not believe that gifted students need support. I'm quite sure that school districts are truly struggling, but I haven't heard of any that are considering reducing their services to any other group of students by a whopping 49%.

Sandy Webster-Worthy, MEd., B.F.A.

President AEGTCCBC

Look for our PSA members blog -
coming soon to our website.

AEGTCCBC WEBSITE at:

www.bctf.bc.ca/PSAs/AEGTCCBC

A Trip Back in Time for Gifted Students

The Penticton Gifted Program provides differentiated learning opportunities for gifted students. Based on a yearly theme, enriched learning opportunities are planned to challenge, interest and enthuse gifted students attending the program. Theme-based activities are cross curricular with a problem solving, thinking skills, process-based focus as set out by the program goals.



Last year our theme was "It's About Time!" Students chose to build a large time machine, capable of holding 7 students, for our time travel adventures. We visited the times of dinosaurs, Greeks, Romans, pirates, Egyptians, pioneers and Medieval times. Associated with our theme, and aided by a grant from the AEGTCCBC, the grades 3 to 5 students had the opportunity to travel back in time, to the days when Fort Steele was a flourishing town. The trip provided the opportunity for gifted students to interact with intellectual peers, an important aspect of gifted education. Forty students and thirty parent supervisors took this journey.

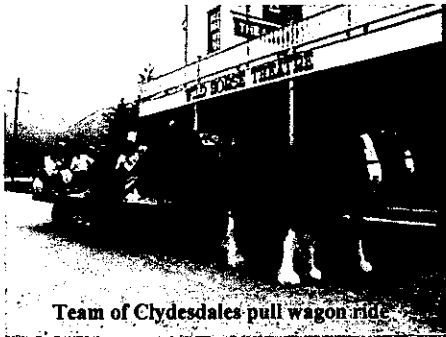
Dressed for the 1800s



At Fort Steele the participants slept two nights in the barracks constructed by the North West Mounted Police. In educational tours the participants learned what it was like to attend school in the 1800's with the strict teacher Miss Bailey. Those were the days of the dunce cap, the strap, of writing lines and of fingernail inspections.



Washing & wringing clothes and churning butter



Team of Clydesdales pull wagon ride

Students learned to do the chores that children helped with at the turn of the century. Some of the chores were making Johnny Cake on a wood stove, churning butter, making ice cream and washing clothes. The scrub board, wringer and the clothes line were industriously employed by enthusiastic students.

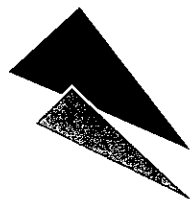
In another tour the blacksmith demonstrated his trade. He illustrated the importance and the techniques employed in blacksmithing.

Our wagon ride around the town-site highlighted the historic points of interest in Fort Steele. We all came home with a new appreciation for what it must have been like to live in Fort Steele more than a century ago. It was a wonderful trip back in time!

by Shirlene Peters,

Teacher of the Gifted,
School District #67, Okanagan Skaha





*The Association of Educators of Gifted, Talented and Creative
Children in BC*

"The Leading Edge"

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS (Note 1)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED June 30, 2008

		\$ 6,767.75
<u>Receipts</u>		
BCTF grant	4,7500	
Membership/subscription fees	(7,156.00)	
Interest	201.39	
Other	11,839.50	
Conference fees	1,058.80	
		10,693.69
<u>Disbursements</u>		
Meeting—Executive	1,740.78	
Meeting— annual general meeting	1,687.50	
Publication— newsletter	1,308.41	
Operating	141.95	
Curriculum Development	250.00	
Miscellaneous	25.00	
Conference— Speakers	(415.20)	
		(4,738.44)
Balance June 30, 2009		\$ 12,723.00

Note 1. This statement reflects only funds held by the BC Teachers' Federation on behalf of the Association of Educators of the Gifted, Talented and Creative Children in BC.

GIFTED ED 09 CONFERENCE FEEDBACK

Attendees were surprised to learn:

"the variety of programming around the province" S. Petrucci

"the decrease in identification of gifted surprises me because there seems to be an increase of bright kids" E. Ensing

"Acceleration is a good thing in some circumstances" C. Andrews

"The decrease in recognized [gifted] students in BC." G. Campbell

What attendees say works well with gifted

Choices!!!

"Check in opportunity – to speak and have your voice be heard—to make connections and practice social skills" J. Bystom

"Building a community and a sense of belonging for the students – an environment that encourages risk taking, making mistakes and sharing ideas . . . its not always about competing" C. Andrews

"Anything that sparks creativity – activities which are flexible enough to allow individual creativity to flourish" K. Stewart

"Provocation, controversy, process-based motivation" T. Steeves

**“Label
the
Program
- Not
the
Child”**



Attendees Comment on the Conference Gifted Ed 09:

- “Lots of great leads for resources and program development” S. Petrucci
“Get rid of the “gifted” label – good idea” E. Ensing
“How to get free books from publishers and authors” C. Andrews
“Tons of websites and direction for resources for gifted ed.” G. Campbell
“Great ideas for delivering service for my students.” C. Burkart
“Looking forward to checking out the resources as recommended by our presenter.” R. Black
“Label the program, not the child” K. Anthony
“Advocacy has to be exceptionally strong” D. Stothers
“Local Specialists Associations are possibilities for advocacy” S. Peters
“A huge list of amazing strategies, websites and resources.” M. Stewart
“There are many sites I can research. I can’t wait to start!” M. Poon

Dr. Joanne Foster at Gifted Ed 09

Reflections on the World Council For Gifted and Talented Children 2009

Contributed by Jocelyn Bystrom

One of the most significant challenges that every classroom teacher faces today is to meet the needs of each and every student that they're privileged to teach. I attended the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children conference that was held in Vancouver this past summer. From the pre-conference presentation by Lynn Berresford and Rose Blackett, on 'Understanding and Effectively Using Psychometric Tests for Identifying the Gifted,' I came away reflecting on their message: **'There are no similarities in the ways the gifted choose to exhibit their uniqueness.'** Myths and Realities in teaching a gifted population were addressed:

Myths Dispelled

All children are gifted in some way,

Gifted learners will excel in any environment, so don't need special attention,

New Realities in Gifted Education:

Parents are excellent identifiers of giftedness with 84% accuracy,
(Silverman,2009)

Optimal assessment of gifted learners is between 5-8.5 years,

Second born children are recognized as 'gifted' much less frequently than first born children, 80% of second born children who follow a 'gifted' older sibling are also gifted,

Underachieving students are often visual-spatial learners, 60-65% of gifted learners are V/S learners and above 80% of highly gifted learners are V/S learners.

Visual-Spatial learners are not succeeding in today's schools! Several speakers addressed the question of "how we can use authentic assessment to identify and assess gifted learners."

At the opening ceremonies each delegate was reminded that **'Giftedness' remains a potentiality until its discovered, explored and enhanced!** Dr. Joseph Renzulli challenged each attendee with Mahatma Gandhi's quotation: **You must be the change you wish to see in the world.**

Editor's Message:

The focus of this newsletter is a follow up on the Gifted Ed 09 conference and on what our members have indicated that they need—more resources and strategies with which to effectively work with the gifted children in BC. I have reviewed some of Dr. Foster's many ideas and you are presented here with ideas from educators from around the province who work with the gifted on a daily basis. These are in a two sided insert that you can keep for handy reference.

Do make use of our website to access the soon to be completed blog link designed to provide a forum for educators of the gifted to network.

Get back to us with feedback on how this is working, or with ideas for modification.

Thank you for the many ways that you make a difference in the lives of our gifted children!

Shirlene Peters, BSc, Med

Teacher of the gifted

speters@summer.com

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE -- 2 PAGES OF RESOURCE IDEAS

Being Smart About Gifted Education – GIFTED ED 09

Presenter Dr. Joanne Foster

Dr. Foster discussed what we, as educators require to ensure each child gets the kind of education he/she needs which includes challenging, engaging, differentiated instruction. We need:

Access to relevant resources and material

More training and Pro-D in gifted education

Opportunities to collaborate and develop liaisons with colleagues

She noted that “Developmental pathways that lead to exceptionally advanced ability are hugely individual, therefore so are the programming implications. [We need to] pay attention to the many dimensions of children’s inter-individual and intra-individual diversity.” We need to ask the question “how should we be meeting this child’s gifted needs?” We also should recognize that using the word “potential” is problematic because a person’s potential is an unknown. Under the heading “Being Smart about Motivation and Productivity”, Dr. Foster suggested that being Happily Productive might be considered a goal for us, as teachers, to have for our students.

It was suggested that Karen Rogers’ (2007) list of 10 best options in Gifted Ed is one place to start the motivation and productivity process. These are:

- daily challenge in talent areas
- rigorous challenge in all academic areas
- teaching of concepts, issues, problems, principles, generalizations in whole to part sequence
- double or triple time pacing in math and science
- elimination of excess drill and practice
- opportunities to be credited for prior knowledge
- opportunities to work independently and be unique
- exposure to content beyond grad level in specific area(s) of talent
- shortening the number of years spent in the K-12 system
- opportunities to socialize and to learn with like-ability peers

CHECK THESE OUT

RESOURCES AND MORE RESOURCES!

These are a few of the Resource ideas that were dropped by Dr. Foster:

NAGC.org (National Association for Gifted Children)

BeingSmart.ca

SENGgifted.org (Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted)

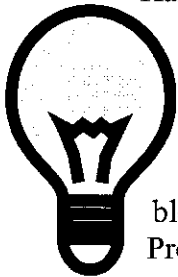
Or try <http://parentingtipz.org/?rid=2209467&rname=senggifted.org&OptId=11>

NationDeceived.org

College of William and Mary – info on teaching gifted in specific subject areas

ABC – Association for Bright Children

Authors: Susan Winnebrenner, Jo Ann Tomlinson, Julia Roberts, M. Neihart (Peak Performance, 2008, Prufrock Press)
Publishers of material on Gifted and Gifted Education: Great Potential Press, Prufrock Press, Free Spirit Press, Roeper Review, Gifted Child Today, Gifted Child Quarterly
“Encyclopedia of Gifted and Talented” by Sage Publication
TV Ontario – webnet and information available on Gifted Education
Iowa Acceleration Scale
Broaden Collaborative Network
Educators of the Gifted – Ontario
Josh Silvertown – Yukon mentorship program at www.dreamcatcheryukon.ca
Renzulli & Reis’s book – Light Up Your Child’s Mind
The Renzulli Learning System
Betts work on Autonomous Learning
Blooms’ Taxonomy
Howard Gardners Multiple Intelligences Theory(s)
Christy Folson on Emotional Intelligence
Rafe on moral development “Teach Like Your Hair is On Fire” is the book title
Robinson Shore “Best Practices in Gifted Education”
Karen Rogers “Reforming Gifted Education”



RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES
IDEAS FROM CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

www.challenge71.bc.ca – social networking blog with individual student blogs linked – for gifted learners worldwide.
Professor Layton – weekly puzzles
www.mathletics.ca – kids compete with other kids from around the world

3D puzzles
Destination Imagination or Odyssey of the Mind
Logic Problems
Lateral thinking puzzles
Websites: www.homeschoolmath.net, www.eduplace.com, www.nrich.org,
www.mathletics.ca, www.brainpop.com
Essential question examples
Bloom’s Taxonomy and Gardners Multiple Intelligences theory
Civic mirror – a program on the web
Edward deBono’s Six Coloured Thinking Hats
Independent projects
Skits, role plays
Problem Based Learning – Lannie Kannevsky at SFU
Creative Problem Solving – see Renzulli
Product choice chart
Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom – book by Susan Winebrenner
Compacting or various acceleration mechanisms
Sarah Stars – kids help publish books, editing
6 week pull out in area of interest