



VOLUME 21, NUMBER 1

World Gifted

NEWSLETTER OF THE WORLD COUNCIL FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN



A Message from the President

Some weeks ago we all enjoyed the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics. It was wonderful to see so many talented men and women having such a high level of success. What a peaceful and friendly atmosphere there was among the athletes and the public spectators from all the different nations and regions of the world. We could observe how enjoyable and satisfying it was to achieve on the highest level. That reminded me of the situation experienced by many gifted and talented children who too often do not get an adequate opportunity or the support to fully develop to their highest levels of achievement. Their environment is limited

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Acceleration of Gifted Students

By LYNNE MACKENZIE-SYKES, WCGTC Delegate, Victoria Australia

The following article is an excerpt from a research study reported at the World Conference in Istanbul. The complete report with references can be found in A Challenge for the New Millennium: Proceedings of the World Conference, Istanbul, Turkey, 1999.

Gifted education in Australia has been an issue of strong interest and debate for many years. Key topics that continue to be vigorously debated include definitions, identification and assessment, and appropriate educational and instructional approaches. One of the most contentious issues surrounds the use of acceleration procedures for gifted students.

Research on Acceleration Practices for Gifted Students

Reviews of the efficacy of accelerative practices with gifted students have appeared regularly in the literature for more than 3 decades. Acceleration, as an educational arrangement for the gifted student, has proven to be overwhelmingly beneficial on both academic and psychosocial grounds. It reportedly improves the motivation, scholarship, and confidence of gifted students without adversely affecting their social and emotional development. Strong, positive endorsement for accelerative practices also comes from gifted students and their parents. Despite evidence supporting acceleration, widespread resistance to both the concept and practice still exists among teachers and educational administrators.

Educational Outcomes

Positive educational benefits of acceleration have been noted in most reviews. For example, academic achievement is generally reported to be equal or better than that of non-accelerated, similar-ability peers, with no

discernible negative effects from acceleration. Writing in 1991, Benbow stated that she was unable to find a single research study showing acceleration to be educationally detrimental.

Successful programs of acceleration, most notably resulting from the Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth (SMPY) founded by Stanley and others in the 1970s, have demonstrated a significant positive impact on the learning of gifted students. Additional advantages of acceleration reported include improved motivation, confidence, and scholarship; prevention of lazy mental habits; early completion of professional training; and reduction of the cost of education. Meta-analyses of research conclude that gifted students from accelerated classes outperformed non-accelerated students of the same age and IQ by almost one full year on achievement tests.

There is increasing agreement that, in addition to acceleration provisions, the curriculum for gifted students should be differentiated from that offered to other students, according to the characteristics of gifted learners (precocity, intensity, and complexity) and their special cognitive and learning needs (e.g., concept-based curriculum, higher-order thinking skills, and a focus on major issues, themes, and ideas).

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Free!

There's still time to win a free
registration for the 2003 World
Conference in Adelaide,
Australia. See page 3 for details.

The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Inc. (WCGTC) is a nonprofit international organization dedicated to the needs of gifted and talented children throughout the world. For membership information contact Headquarters:

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WORLD COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS

World Gifted is the newsletter of the World Council. Published three times a year, it contains the latest news and information concerning the organization, its membership, and the international gifted education community. Any article or portion thereof may be reprinted with credit given to the source. Send all news and articles to Barbara Clark, Editor, clarkbj@earthlink.net or to Headquarters.

Gifted and Talented International, refereed by an editorial review board of leading international gifted educators, is the official journal of the World Council. The purpose of the journal is to share current theory, research, and practice in gifted education with its audience of international educators, scholars, researchers, and parents and is published twice a year. Prospective authors are requested to submit manuscripts or queries to:

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Calendar

July 8-19, 2002

Confratute 2002

University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, USA
For information, contact joann.easton@uconn.edu

August 12-16, 2002

7th Annual Conference

Asia-Pacific Federation

Bangkok, Thailand
"Igniting Children's Potentials and Creativity"
For information:

Research & Development Center for the Gifted & Talented
Room 936, Srinakharinwirot University
Sukhumvit 23 Road
Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Tel: 662-2602601, Fax: 662-2602601
e-mail: usanee_thai@yahoo.com

October 9-13, 2002

European Council for High Ability (ECHA) Conference

Rhodes, Greece
www.ortra.com
For information, contact Sagit Ishay, echa@ortra.co.il

October 20-23, 2002

9th National Conference

Australian Association of the Education of the Gifted & Talented (AAEGT)

"The Gifted Journey: Reflecting Forward"
Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Australia
For information, contact sueurban@bigpond.com

November 1-3, 2002

49th National Convention

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC-US)

Adam's Mark Hotel
Denver, Colorado
For information, contact Lancey Boros, Lboros@nagc.org

March, 2003

Conference of the Americas

Monterrey, Mexico
Organized by
Mexican Association for the Gifted
Mexican Ministry of Education
World Council for Gifted and Talented Children
American Institute of Monterrey
For further information contact AMEXPAS@prodigy.net.mx

August 1-5, 2003

15th Biennial World Conference

Co-sponsored by the World Council for Gifted & Talented Children and the Gifted & Talented Children's Association of South Australia

"Gifted 2003: A Celebration Downunder"
Adelaide Convention Centre
Adelaide, South Australia
For information, www.worldgifted.org

Update from Headquarters

Contest
deadline:
June 1, 2002

Win a free registration to Gifted 2003!

Two promotional campaigns provide a chance to win a free registration for Australia 2003 World Conference

This year's World Council membership drive offers members two ways to win a free registration for the 2003 World Conference in Adelaide. The promotion deadline is June 1, 2002. Contact Headquarters for new brochures, which you can distribute, or direct prospective members to our website at www.worldgifted.org where they'll find a membership form. Make sure your name is on the application form so we know that the membership is due to your efforts.

"1 by 1"

Sign up one new member and your name goes into a lottery pool. On June 2, 2002, one name will be drawn for a free registration to the 2003 World Conference.

"1 by many"

Sign up the most new members by June 1, 2002 and you automatically win a free registration for the 2003 World Conference.

Thanks for the Silver and Gold!



SILVER

Many thanks to new members **Gari Aikaterini**, Athens, Greece and **Lucinda Choi**, Hong Kong for their Silver memberships, and to longtime World Council member **Kathy Hargrove**, Dallas TX, USA, for renewing as a Silver member.

GOLD

A special thank you to WCGTC president **Klaus Urban** for his 2-year Gold renewal.

We encourage you to consider renewing your membership in one of the following categories and also to contact community members—businesses, organizations, leaders—who are interested in supporting gifted education. The additional contributions help ensure ongoing member services and 10% of these special category fees are contributed to the newly created Barbara Clark Scholarship Fund, which will assist educators with registration and travel expenses for World Conference attendance.

Silver	1-year US\$100	2-year US\$190
Gold	1-year US\$250	2-year US\$475
Platinum	1-year US\$500	2-year US\$950
Lifetime membership	US\$1250	

JOIN A COMMITTEE

A chance to get involved and make new friendships

World Council committee chairs are looking for members who are interested in working on their projects. Serving on a committee is an opportunity to get involved in the organization and network with your international colleagues. If you have the time and commitment, contact a committee chair by e-mail.

Conference

Janice Leroux, jalta00@hotmail.com

Parents

Shirley Kokot, kokotsj@unisa.ac.za

Publications

Barbara Clark, clarkbj@earthlink.net

Research

Sandra Kaplan, snk6@aol.com

Technology

Taisir Subhi Yamin, taisir@yahoo.com

Welcome New Delegates

The Executive Committee welcomes new Delegates for Jordan.

Janette Wakileh
Laila Fatima El-Amrani
Azmi S. S. Shahin



News & Ad Deadlines

Issue	Deadline
June 2002	May 6, 2002
October 2002	September 9, 2002
February 2003	January 7, 2003

For advertising rates, contact WCGTC headquarters at worldgt@earthlink.net.

DELEGATES & AFFILIATES

Don't forget to send "News from Around the World" and "Calendar" events. If you send photos electronically, make sure they are at least 300 dpi.

Check the World Council electronic Bulletin Board (select "Global Connections" on the website at www.worldgifted.org). Add your comments to a discussion in progress or initiate a new topic for discussion.

News from Around the World

FROM BAHRAIN

Bahraini Society for Giftedness and Creativity Established

Bahrain has launched the first society in the Gulf region to serve and nurture the potential of gifted individuals in the country. The Bahraini Society for Giftedness and Creativity was officially established on October 31, 2001 with 33 founding members, who are local active figures coming from diverse backgrounds—artists, university professors, psychologists, economists, medical doctors, engineers, educators, and business people.

One of the main objectives of the society is to identify, nurture, and recognize gifted and talented individuals at all age levels—children, youth, and adults. The society also aims to cooperate with similar societies and institutions, at regional and international levels, to exchange expertise and ideas in the field.

Members of the elected board of directors are:

- Shaikh Fawaz Al Khalifa (President)
- Dhafer Alumran (Vice-president)
- Dr. Ali Lori (Secretary)
- Mrs. Fowzia Al- Mahroos (Treasurer)
- Mr. Abdulla Al- Moharraqi
- Dr. Jihan Alumran
- Mr. Mubarak Najim
- Dr Marian Al- Jalahima
- Dr. Faisal Al-Naser
- Mr. Khaled Issac
- Mrs. Ilhan Qarooni

Submitted by Jihan Alumran
WCGTC Delegate, Bahrain



FROM GERMANY

Gifted Children in Germany—In the Focus of Psychologists

Identification of gifted children at the earliest possible stage of development is a precondition for effective and fruitful furthering measurements. Identification by parents is not as reliable or as valid as by psychological testing. A group of psychologists in the German Psychologists Association who specialize in the diagnosis of gifted children was constituted recently to provide expert diagnosis and counseling for parents and teachers. I belong



to this group of experts which meets once a year to exchange experiences and discuss new developments. The constitution of such a group is an important step to prove the diagnostic base for counseling and nurturing gifted children. Our group is represented on the Internet and open to anyone seeking help.

INTERTEL, a Society of the Gifted—Also for Children

As a member of the WCGTC I want to introduce readers to an International Legion of Intelligence called INTERTEL. I have been a member of this society for 24 years and still enjoy my membership very much.

Founded in 1966, in the USA, Intertel today counts about 2,000 members from over 30 countries, coming from all walks of life.

The special intellectual, emotional, and social needs that accompany unusually high mental abilities remain with gifted individuals throughout their lives. Children can handle these needs more or less well as many cases of underachievement show, and grownups are grateful to find congenial people. Intertel exists to help meet those needs for individuals with an IQ at, or above the 99th percentile, as measured on a standard IQ test.

The society has three purposes:

- to encourage meaningful intellectual fellowship (among children as well as adults)
- to foster an exchange of ideas on any and all subjects
- to assist in research relating to high ability.

I think that members of the World Council throughout the world could use this resource. Gifted children can also become members and enjoy this fellowship. To learn more about Intertel, please visit their website at www.intertel-iq.org or e-mail at intertel@aol.com.

Submitted by Ida Fleiss
WCGTC Delegate, Germany



NEWS FROM THE EMERALD ISLE

Irish Association for Gifted Children

First and foremost I would like to thank the World Council for the sterling job they did on their conference in Barcelona. It was truly a wonderful and educational experience, especially for a parent with only life's experiences

as her major qualifier. I was awed, and very pleasantly surprised to meet and talk with so many of the people who I had come to know so well in my library books (I also maintain, and run our organization's Reference and Resource Centre). My associate, Nicola O'Leary, was also delighted to meet so many of the people she had made contact with at previous conferences in the USA.

It was comforting to know that we are not alone in our struggle for more understanding and provision for the gifted population.

The Irish Association for Gifted Children is a small association with a big commitment and no funding other than that provided by our members. We live in a country that is just barely beginning to come to grips with the fact that these children need "more." The Department of Education is aware of us, but as in most cases, moves slowly. Still, their acknowledgement of our existence is progress, and so we carry on.

We are always happy to hear of anyone in the field coming our way, and generally try to see to it that they get to lift a pint of Guinness or two, and of course pick their brains for any information that may be useful or relevant to our situation.

Nicky will be present at the CAG Conference in California this year, and we have small hopes of attending the one in Adelaide, if funds can be found.

Our next upcoming events are a talk on Sensory Integration Issues, by Senior Occupational Therapist Valerie Cribbin of our Lucien Clinic; and a talk in May by Dr. Pat Shuler from New York on Social and Emotional Issues.

Our contact information is:

IAGC—Irish Association for Gifted Children
Carmicheal House
4 North Brunswick St.
Dublin 7, Ireland
E-mail leslie_graves@hotmail.com
www.homepage.tinet.ie/~iagc/iage.htm

Submitted by Leslie Graves-Gowan
Chairperson, Irish Association for Gifted Children (IAGC)



FROM NEW ZEALAND

Recent Developments in Gifted Education

In the early 1990s, there was a sudden positive shift in attitudes about gifted and talented chil-

dren and the importance of offering appropriate educational opportunities for this group of learners. Research suggests that reforms associated with Tomorrow's Schools, which shifted decision making to schools and their parent community, may be partially responsible.

A significant number of schools and some early childhood centres in the first few years following the introduction of these administrative changes, developed policies and programmes as a response to the needs of their community.

New Zealand has never adopted a single definition of giftedness and talent, favouring instead multicultural and multicategorical approaches to identification and provision. There is also recognition in the educational community of the importance of providing rich and challenging experiences to help gifted learners realise their potential. Government initiatives have reflected this philosophy.

In 1998, an advisory group to the Ministry of Education suggested that there should be more guidance from the government. In response, the Ministry of Education has provided a handbook, on-line materials, and professional development that provide information about internationally and nationally recognised definitions of giftedness and talent, including Jill Bevan Brown's work on Maori children with special abilities.

Interest in providing for the needs of these children is community-focused as parents have a role in governing New Zealand schools and determining priorities. Approaches have, therefore, been extremely inclusive and have been adopted most frequently in regular classrooms. There are also one specialist school and several one-day schools for gifted students that are privately funded by fees and sponsorship.

The advisory group expressed its concern that provisions for gifted learners may be present in only some schools. In 2001, the Minister of Education commissioned a smaller working party to focus on addressing this concern and to investigate long-term national initiatives.

While this working party endorsed the multicategorical approach suggested by previous initiatives, and acknowledged the importance of multicultural values, and social, emotional, and motivational factors, the principles and recommendations are less conservative than in previous initiatives. The report suggests that all schools are responsible for providing for these learners, not only those where the school community has identified a special interest in this

group. The report was presented to the Minister of Education at the end of 2001 and a government response is expected early in 2002. It is likely that any new initiatives will be available for schools and early childhood centres in 2003.

Information on current Ministry of Education initiatives is available at www.tki.org.nz/r/gifted/talented/index_e.php and on the report of the working party at www.executive.govt.nz/minister/mallard/gifted_education.

Submitted by Leone Basher and
Roger Moltzen, WCGTC Delegates,
New Zealand



FROM USA

CONFRATUTE 2002

Confratute, a professional development conference and summer institute, is celebrating its 25th year July 8-19, 2002. Welcoming staff and participants from throughout the United States and around the world to the campus of the University of Connecticut, Confratute offers a unique experience to the educational community. The focus is on differentiation of instruction and enrichment learning and teaching. We believe that gifted students can benefit from a continuum of high-end learning services; that learning is maximized when teachers consider each student's abilities, interests, and learning styles; and that we accommodate these differences in a variety of settings. Everyone who teaches at Confratute is hand-picked from among the very best professionals who spend the majority of their time directly involved with gifted programs. Most of all, Confratute is a community of learners who are willing to put aside the roles and responsibilities of their everyday jobs so that they can become totally immersed with others in an atmosphere that is purposefully designed to promote acceptance, trust, scholarship, hard work, hard fun, and the belief that everyone has something to contribute to educational improvement. Contact joann.easton@uconn.edu for more information.

Submitted by Joe Renzulli,
WCGTC Delegate, USA

Send in news from your country
for "News Around the World." June
issue deadline: **May 6, 2002.**

Hope for Peace in the World

Educate Love in Gifted Students

By DEN-MO TSAI, WCGTC Executive
Committee Member, Taiwan ROC



September 11, 2001, Terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center shocked people all over the world. How can this happen? So many

innocents were killed. To destroy hatred and to stop wars are certainly a challenge to us. Although wars have never totally disappeared, we should not accept them as the fate of human beings. Tragedy like the World Trade Center should never happen again.

As we look into the year 2002 and the years to come, peace in the world is more than important. But what can we do about it? We know leadership makes a difference. When there is a war, there must be leaders; and it is the leaders who begin or end the war. We may not have the power to stop the leaders from starting wars, but we have the educational power to change future leaders, because their childhoods are in our hands. Gifted children are the leaders of the future, and we, as educators and experts in this field, can change gifted children and they will change the world.

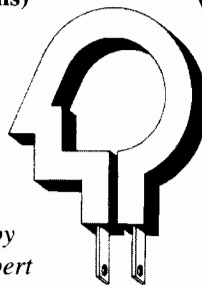
As members of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, our influence is worldwide. We should, in every corner of the world, educate love in gifted students. The affective domain should be emphasized and effectively facilitated. Gifted children should be loved in our educational environment—for love will not be taught without love. With love in their hearts, our gifted children will grow up as leaders to enhance peace. So let us hope for peace in the world, because we have the privilege of educating the future leaders and if we work together toward that hope, we can make a difference. The leaders that we will produce will love peace and, by their power, the tragedy of killing human beings can be avoided. ■

One University, three World-Class Programs working together to provide comprehensive training in gifted education and talent development

Confratute

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- Special workshops offered daily on a variety of topics



Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development

University of Connecticut
 2131 Hillside Road
 Unit 3007
 Storrs, CT 06269-3007
 860-486-4826

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 - Developing a Thinking Skills Program
- Underserved Populations and Multicultural Aspects of Gifted Education
- Collaborating with Parents and Community in Gifted Education
 - Readings in Gifted Education
 - Creativity
 - Developing Schoolwide Enrichment Programs



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— Joseph S. Renzulli



Dr. Joseph S. Renzulli
 Director, Neag Center for Gifted Education & Talent Development

For additional information on these and other programs visit our website: <http://www.gifted.uconn.edu>

An Incomplete History of the World Council

By BARBARA CLARK, WCGTC Past-President

This article was written to present an overview of the development of the World Council especially as it pertains to issues of administration, governance, and funding. This overview is intended to help the membership understand the evolution of the organization, its mission, and its vital potential.

The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children was initiated in London in 1975 by Henry Collis a prominent British educator of the gifted. The purpose was to give researchers and scholars from around the world an opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss common concerns in the field of gifted education. Five hundred educators from 53 nations attended this first meeting. It was decided that in order to facilitate the goals of the organization the group would meet every 2 years at a World Conference. The first constitution of the World Council was ratified at the second World Conference held in San Francisco (US) in 1977. From this beginning, one of the major roles of the leaders of the organization became the provision of a Biennial World Conference. In 1979 a journal was established and in 1980 a newsletter was added to fulfill the mission of communication and sharing of professional ideas and research.

Biennial World Conferences

As funding was limited to contributions from members, from the beginning, the Biennial World Conferences were awarded to member countries on the basis of bids. Those from the city receiving the bid would fund and administer the conference. The World Council did not expect nor receive funding from the conferences in any substantial or predictable manner. On occasion \$10 per participant might be shared with the World Council by the host city. No fiscal reporting was expected nor received by the world association.

Many of the World Conferences made very little money and often were given at a loss to the sponsoring city. During that time, prior to the awarding of a bid, the Executive Committee at the expense of the local conference committee conducted a site visit. This became a very expensive requirement for the host city. On many occasions those working to give the conference found their seed money depleted

and their profit reduced by this visit. In addition it was expected that the local conference committee would provide for the expenses of the Executive Committee during the conference.

With the adoption of a new constitution in 1995, a different structure was established for the administration of the organization and the Biennial World Conferences. Services for the membership and networking among members became important and desirable. Prior to 1993, universities housing the Secretariat sponsored the administration of the organization and provided much of the funding and it was not as important for the conferences to return a profit. However, a change from a university-based-and-funded administration created a necessity for other sources of funding to support the Executive Administrator, headquarters, operational expenses, and any other services if the association goals were to be carried forward.

The Biennial World Conference held in Seattle (US) in 1997 was the first conference given under the new constitution. As provided in the bylaws and policies, the conference was organized and administered by the World Council with a Local Conference Committee given responsibility for only local matters. This structure was intended to optimize the quality and organization of the conference and to return a larger profit as a major funding source to the world association. The Seattle conference was well attended (nearly 1,000) and benefited the organization by returning nearly \$100,000 to the World Council budget. Because the conference was held in the United States, many volunteers were used, expenses were cut, and no split in the profits was expected by the local organizers allowing all profits after expenses to be retained by the World Council. World Council membership numbers also benefited as all those attending the conference who paid non-member fees were automatically granted membership. A membership of 300 became nearly 1,000 members after the conference due to this provision.

The 1999 World Conference was held in Istanbul, Turkey, and due to unfortunate political circumstances (bombing in Kosovo) many of the members perceived the area to be dan-

gerous and the conference was not well attended (less than 300) leaving the financial outcome with little profit. Those who did attend found the intimate grouping highly productive as a warmth and camaraderie created a most memorable conference. Nevertheless, with the financial gain from the conference limited, the organization was forced to rely on membership dues and gifts for its operation during the next 2 years. Fortunately, a general contribution (\$6,000) was received from a businessman in Taiwan and an educator/businessman from Australia sponsored the publications of the World Council for a year (\$9,000). In addition, during 1999, one of the newsletters of the organization was sponsored by Brigham-Young University (\$2,000) at the request of Sally Todd, a professor at the University and a US Delegate to the World Council.

Barcelona, Spain, the site of the 2001 World Conference, had a much larger registration of nearly 600 participants. The conference fulfilled the mission of the organization for communication with over 200 papers and research studies presented. A new parent strand was well attended and drew positive reviews. The site was gracious and beautiful. However, because of lower-than-expected attendance of Spanish participants no profit was returned to the World Council. As we enter the 2-year period before the next World Conference to be held in Adelaide, Australia in 2003, creative financing will be necessary.

The Administration of the Association

Starting in 1979, the organization was administered by a Secretariat established at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City. Marvin Gold, a professor at the university, became the first Executive Administrator. A. Harry Passow was instrumental in organizing this Secretariat and Teachers College contributed the facilities, personnel, and operational expenses. Other sources of funding were the dues from a limited number of members, and the fees from the Biennial World Conferences.

In 1983 the Secretariat of the World Council was moved to the University of South Florida under the direction of Dorothy Sisk, a professor at the university. Dr. Sisk became the Executive Administrator and conducted the affairs of the organization. Again funding for the operation came mainly from the university including housing, support for the Executive Administrator's salary, materials, and equipment. It was during this time that additional

conferences were held, such as an off-year conference in Mexico, which helped to support the operations of the organization. Tom Kemnitz, the printer of the association's publications, donated some of the printing costs. In the late 1980s Dr. Sisk relocated to Lamar University in Texas with this university assuming much of the financial support of the World Council. Dr. Sisk resigned as Executive Administrator in 1993.

Norah Maier, the president (1989-1993), then assumed the administration of the association. Dr. Maier was a clinical teacher at the demonstration school at the University of Toronto in Canada. The administration of the association was moved to Dr. Maier's office and the business offices of the university. This created much confusion and the result was a loss of records including membership records, financial records, and any records of Executive Committee meetings previously held by the association.

During 1993 the Secretariat was relocated to Purdue University and was administered by a graduate assistant of John Feldhusen, a professor of the university and the editor of the World Council journal and newsletter. The membership roles were reconstructed and the day-to-day operations of the organization and its publications were reestablished. The resources for funding the secretariat came, in part, from university grants administered by Dr. Feldhusen. Dr. Feldhusen saw to it that the journal publication was returned to a dependable schedule of delivery and that the quality was sustained. Part of the printing costs and the costs for the headquarter office were provided by grants from the university and the World Council.

In 1995 A. Harry Passow was contacted by David Belin, a noted lawyer and sponsor of the Belin/Blank Center for Gifted and Talented Development at the University of Iowa, who offered to grant the association \$90,000 if they would relocate the World Council headquarters to the Center. He requested that the Director of the Center, Nicholas Colangelo, a professor at the university, become the Executive Administrator for the World Council. With the agreement of the World Council President (1993-1997), Dr. Wu Tien Wu (Taiwan), Dr. Feldhusen, and the Executive Committee, Dr. Colangelo and the staff of the now International Center ran the operations of the association for the next 2 years.

After the Biennial Conference in 1997, Dr. Colangelo resigned the position of Executive Administrator and withdrew the Belin funding.

With the resignation of Dr. Colangelo and the withdrawal of the funding and services of the Belin/Blank Center it became necessary to find a new Headquarters and staff. Barbara Clark, as the new president (1997-2001), hired Sheila Madsen and Dennis Stevens and their Madsteve consulting company in Northridge, CA, to serve as the Headquarters. The World Council became one of their clients in December of 1997. The duties include: day-to-day operations such as communication services (e.g., e-mail, mailing, phone, and fax); financial services; publication of the *World Gifted* newsletter, brochures, and forms; services to the delegates; and membership services. During the years of the Biennial World Conference, the firm assumes numerous additional duties that are necessary to produce a professional conference.

Because of previous problems in record keeping it was necessary for the Headquarters staff to hire and monitor an accounting firm to reinstate the nonprofit tax status of the organization and conduct an audit of the organization's books. It was also necessary to re-establish with the help of a lawyer the incorporation status of the organization that had lapsed in 1978, and establish a computerized membership database from previously numerous and disparate sources of information. Due to lack of funding, there has been no Executive Administrator for the World Council since 1997, although the constitution of the organization allows for such a position. The Headquarters staff and the president have performed the duties of the position.

The Governance of the Association

Constitutionally, the primary governance of the organization is vested in the hands of the president who functions in close cooperation with the executive administrator. The advice and consent of the Executive Committee is sought in important matters and any policy changes require a majority vote of the Executive Committee. Bylaw changes require a plurality of the vote of the full membership.

As provided for in the first constitution of the organization, ratified at the World Conference in San Francisco (US) in 1977, elections were held at each biennial conference for the country's Delegates, for the seats on the Executive Committee that were becoming vacant, and, on alternate conference years, for the President. Delegates were nominated and elected by the members present at the conference from each country and the President and the members of the Executive Committee

were nominated and elected by the Delegates. Delegates who could not attend the conference had no opportunity to run or vote for any position and members had no vote for the Executive Committee members unless they were Delegates.

Throughout this period the Secretariat and the Executive Administrator conducted the business of the organization. The president and the Executive Committee were a group of professional educators, researchers, and scholars whose major responsibilities were performed at the Biennial World Conferences and at one Executive Committee meeting in the year between conferences. That meeting was usually held in the city that would be the location for the next Biennial World Conference often in conjunction with the conference site visit.

During the Biennial World Conference held in Toronto (Canada) in 1993 changes were proposed to the constitution. In an effort to better meet the needs of the organization and gain better representation for the membership a task force was formed and a new constitution was written. The Bylaws and Policies Committee delineated the responsibilities for all officers, the Executive Committee, and the Executive Administrator. Committees were formed to provide service to the membership and through them to educators and researchers working in the field of gifted education. The voting process was changed so that all of the membership would have a vote both on the selection of the Delegates in their country and the Executive Committee. The Delegates from every country were given a vote on the selection of the President. The Biennial World Conference was restructured so that the World Council would be the organizer and the duties and responsibilities of a World Council Conference Committee and a Local Conference Committee were delineated. The conference duties of the Executive Administrator and the Headquarters were assigned. A number of other provisions were made in the new constitution to strengthen the governance of the organization. The new constitution was ratified January 1, 1995 and, with additional amendments, remains the constitution under which the association presently functions.

Funding

As is evident from the history of the administration of the organization, funds were usually limited to the necessary operations and provided by the university housing the Secretariat at the time. The membership fees

provided little fiscal support for the organization because of the limited number of members and covered only the costs of a small portion of the operations. The financial structure of the Biennial World Conferences did not provide any substantial funding for the organization because the conferences were run by members from the host city and profit sharing with the world organization was seldom available nor expected. The host city operated with little or no oversight from the association and often made little profit. No reports or fiscal records of the conference were required by the World Council.

From time to time gifts were made to the world association by groups such as the Asian-Pacific Federation, a World Council Affiliate, who at the end of their regional conferences often contributed several hundred dollars to the World Council.

During the administration of Dr. Nora Maier (1989-1993) the limited funding of the organization became more problematic. The move of the organization's headquarters to the University of Toronto did not result in the university assuming the operating expenses of the organization. The Biennial World Conference held in Toronto produced little income for the organization. Other fiscal *problems incurred during this administration* left minimal funds that could be passed on to the next administration. The funds that were made available were placed in reserve and invested by Dr. Wu so that the organization could retain some financial stability.

Even with the help in 1995 of David Belin and the Belin/Blank International Center for Gifted and Talented, money was unavailable to cover many expenses such as the mailing of the publications, and the travel of the Executive Committee to the yearly meetings. Dr. Wu, during his presidency, contributed generously from his own resources to fund much of the organizational travel of the Executive Committee and the costs of the publication editors. Even with these gifts and the continuing support from grants from Dr. Feldhusen at Purdue University, the journal and newsletter were not mailed in a timely manner due to lack of funds. A priority of the administration of Dr. Clark was to return the journal and the newsletter to a timely schedule of publication.

The World Council Journal and Newsletter

The association journal, *Gifted International*, was established in 1979 and grew in readership contributing to the growth of the member-

ship. Both universities housing the World Council under Dorothy Sisk as Executive Administrator, helped with the funding of the publications of the organization. Tom Kemnitz, the owner of a publishing house, assumed a part of the cost for printing and for years the journal, John Feldhusen of Purdue University accepted the Editorship of the World Council journal changing its name to *Gifted and Talented International* in 1993. With a grant from Purdue University he provided for a part of the expenses for its production, including a graduate assistant to serve as copy editor. Even with this support the journal absorbed the major part of the membership fees in mailing and other printing expenses. With the retirement of Dr. Feldhusen, a contract for a new editor for the journal was let for bid and the proposal of Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, a professor at the College of William and Mary was accepted. Dr. VanTassel-Baska has produced a quality product twice a year within an agreed upon budget which includes in kind support from the College of William and Mary. Under Dr. VanTassel-Baska's supervision, the production of the journal is always on schedule and of high quality.

In 1980 a newsletter was added to the association's publications to provide a timely way to inform the membership of current events and ideas from the field. From the beginning, the newsletter, *World Gifted*, was published by the universities that housed the Secretariat with those universities supporting the expenses. The newsletter is currently being published at World Council Headquarters with much of the newsgathering dependent on the Delegates and their colleagues. The publication has maintained a schedule of three copies a year. As noted, limited funding on many occasions caused both the journal and the newsletter, the organization's only communication with its membership, to be unpredictable in its delivery schedule. The importance of the two publications cannot be overstated both for the communication value and for the service value to the membership.

This overview of the history of the administration, governance, and funding of the World Council has been presented so that you as a member can better understand the structure and function of these areas of the organization. This understanding can help you find the role best suited to you to contribute your talent to the World Council and those whom it serves. The potential for the service that the World Council can provide is enormous and vital. The possibilities for service are unlimited. What is

required is a commitment on the part of each member. Together as a strong world organization we can become a united force to help gifted children worldwide. ■

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15th World Conference for Gifted and Talented Children
Gifted 2003, A Celebration Downunder

2003 Conference
August 1-5, 2003

Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, South Australia



The 15th Biennial Conference of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children is currently being planned. The local organisers encourage World Council members to visit Adelaide August 1-5, 2003. The conference will take place in Adelaide's new Convention Centre, just a 5 minute walk from the centre of the city. Adelaide is renowned for its pleasant Mediterranean climate, its excellent restaurants, and being a small city, its safety and accessibility.

Most of the conference hotels are across the road or next door to the Convention Centre.

The key themes for the Conference will be Communication Technology and Information for Gifted Students and the Arts, as Adelaide is "the Arts Capital of Australia." These themes will be accompanied by themes of curriculum, social and emotional development of gifted students, creativity, identification, the profoundly gifted, parenting and much more.

Attendees can look forward to pre- and post-conference tours, a Gala Dinner, pre-conference workshops, school visits, Student Showcase, and professional exhibitions. You will be able to experience some of the wonders of Australia, particularly South Australia. Visit a wine growing area just half an hour from the centre of Adelaide, pat koalas at Cleland Park on the outskirts of the city, go shopping in the downtown area of Adelaide 5 minutes from the Convention Centre, visit one of the many art galleries or theatres, or take a day trip to Kangaroo Island to walk on the beach with seals or pat a kangaroo. If you are lucky, you will see the whales playing in the Southern Ocean. Or you can just stroll through the parklands that surround the city.

The World Council's host, the Gifted and Talented Children's Association, is being supported by Flinders University of South Australia and the Australian Association for the Education of the Gifted. Together we plan to have a conference that will excite, stimulate, and inspire attendees from wherever they have come.

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15th Biennial World Conference

Gifted 2003
 A Celebration Downunder



August 1-5, 2003

Adelaide, South Australia

Co-sponsored by
 World Council for Gifted and
 Talented Children
 and

Gifted and Talented Children's Association
 of South Australia

Conference Venue

The Adelaide Convention Centre is one of the world's top 10 convention centres. It is located on the banks of the Torrens River, adjacent to international hotels, cafés, restaurants, and nightclubs, all within walking distance. Adelaide is Australia's arts capital, and is also famous for its internationally renowned wineries and as the world capital of opal, Australia's gemstone.

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World Conference Musings

An informal science learning experience demonstrates the scientific story about the formation of the solar system

By RICHARD SHOPE, Science Educator, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Innocence

The innocence of August, 2001, beckoned us to Barcelona, Spain. We gathered to discuss the world of gifted children. In a noble gesture of time capsule hope, we expressed prescient thoughts to communicate down through the next seven generations. Perhaps, looking back, we all touched on the truly important details. We expressed the conviction that we must *continue the vigilance of working with our gifted young people to strive toward their best, to take responsibility to learn and to lead, and to include humanity in their hearts as they find creative solutions with their minds.*

Setting the Stage: Testing Our Giftedness

It appeared effortless. But the hour preceding the Opening moment was fraught with creative improvisation. Backstage, I mimed for the Catalan choir and, in Spanish, clued them in to the science story I would be asking them to act out with me. The placement of the choir in their bright floral-patterned dresses and the grand piano was to be off to the side. The center stage was to be given over to staid tables and chairs in a row for the dignitaries. We wanted a theatrical change. Clear the stage, set piano and choir dead center, and then we would follow with the mime and science learning. But the hotel staff were told no, it was not possible to rearrange, not possible to move the piano. We haggled, we managed to persuade them to clear the stage, but against their wishes, with only the authority of the creative moment, I distracted the hotel staff as the choir leader and our two guest mathematicians moved the grand piano ironically into place.

How the Solar System Formed

Science is communicated through the art of apt

analogies. In my current role as a Science Educator at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and as a specialist in mime and science learning, my purpose at the Opening of the World Conference was to create an informal science learning experience that engaged the entire room in motion in an intercultural, intergenerational, interdisciplinary way to embrace the scientific story about how the solar system formed, stranger than myth. That we are all the result of the marvelous mystery of supernovae exploding energetically into clouds of hydrogen vapor that then whirled into protoplanetary disks out of which emerged our star, the Sun, and the evolving planetary structures that we know today. I wanted to create a common shared experience of the solar nebular theory, the prevailing scientific explanation of the ori-



gins of our Solar System. The choir leader provided piano improvisation as background ambience. I invited the choir to be the hydrogen gas cloud floating in galactic space, center stage. I enlisted a man to mime a star going supernova. I urged the audience to motion with their arms the shockwave energy moving through space, working all around the room back to the nebula, causing the choir members

to swirl and clump into planetary debris, until a Sun formed, and the early planets, coming to resemble the form of the Solar System that we know today. All this, in order to create the foundation to appreciate the elegance of a new idea, the interplanetary superhighway system, best expressed in the language of higher mathematics.

Act Two: The Interplanetary Superhighway System

Enter, the two Catalan mathematicians—and skilled piano movers—Josep Masdemont, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, and Gerard Gomez, Universitat de Barcelona, whose brilliant theoretical work is the basis of our theme, the interplanetary superhighway system. Along with Martin Lo at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, they are on the leading edge of understanding that the delicate interactions of gravity in our Solar System produce not only the familiar warping of spacetime, as Einstein described, but also reveal eddies and sweeps of gravitational streams that gently tug at particles and planetoids, creating a veritable transport system of dust, ice, comets, and moons. That might offer explanations of the mechanism of the planetary capture of moons, the fluid motion and interplay of material moving toward and away from the Sun throughout the Solar System.

The analogy of an interplanetary superhighway system conveys the image of a series of gravitational interchanges caused by the peculiar interactions of the variety of gravita-

“...we’ve got to do a better job of communicating complexity in dynamic concrete experiences, so that the math and science can emerge from within, no less than the poetry and art.”

tional fields in the Solar System as streams of particles large and small move in patterns that can be modeled and tested for veracity. Those who love math and have stepped up to the challenge of chaos theory and the “three-body problem”—join with those who love space exploration and step up to the task of searching for energy-effective trajectories for space transportation—to make substantial break-

throughs in a marvel of interdisciplinary intellectual collaboration.

Of those in the hall, only a handful of delegates admitted to higher mathematics understanding who could likely join the two mathematicians in an expert-level conversation in the language of Fourier Transformation, wave functions, and Leibnitz equations that describe Poincare's efforts to calculate the chaos of multiple influences of gravitational bodies. Yet, to approach the topic, we pressed on to illustrate, first with slides and pictures, and then in the poetic presence of a dramatic mime enactment of how particles (played by choir members) move through the interplanetary superhighway system (played by audience members). Thus the essence of complex conceptual knowledge was communicated in a shared experience, a vivencia, a vividly lived moment—a mime and science learning experience, that will be remembered, the meaning embedded in the memory of the evening. The very telling of a story matures the mind of the listener so that the next time these ideas are encountered those who were present will enter a déjà vu and instead of turning away from science and math, they will tune in to connect to a familiar and pleasant affect. Then the science learning that was planted as a seed using mime, will sprout and grow, eventually to bear fruit, as science learning.

In moments such as these, we succeed in passing ideas holistically from one generation to the next and the work on the details can be picked up and studied further in more classical ways.

But the job is not done, it's just begun, we need to inspire young gifted children to step up to the challenge, too. However, we've got to do a better job of communicating complexity in dynamic concrete experiences, so that the math and science can emerge from within, no less than the poetry and art. In this event, math, science, technology, poetry, and mime merged in the dramatic display of ideas, working in waves throughout the room.

Closing

At the close of the Conference, we lifted our varied voices to send messages down through Seven Generations, and perhaps now endarkened by the events of 9.11.2001, those words seem like dust in the wind, but still our lives must resonate with resolve, to lift above the chaos of fear and terror, to reassure, to reassess, to remember, and to reclaim the wonder and curiosity if not the gift of innocence, that is so necessary to heal and rebuild. ■

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

continued from 1

either by ignorance of their needs, lack of information on how to meet their needs, or even intentionally hindering them from meeting such needs. From my own counseling practice I have learned of tragic cases where the school setting does not allow for individual excellence. To experience one's own high achievement and expertise, with or even without external rewards, is a wonderful personal experience and necessary for gifted and talented children and for the development of their personality. It is our shared interest and our intention to improve that situation for the gifted and talented so that everybody can fully develop according to their potentials.

If the World Council is to be able to achieve such an intention, there are some internal issues that must be addressed.

First, you will notice that the Executive Committee has decided to expand the membership fee structure. The normal fee will remain the same however; in addition, donation fees have been created for those who are able and willing to donate more than the normal fee to the World Council. I have decided to renew my own membership with the 2-year Gold fee. I fully understand if someone cannot afford this higher donation fee, but I really hope that many of you, our members, will be able and willing to give an additional financial contribution supporting and ensuring the ongoing work of the World Council.

Second, I am asking for a contribution of your time to make the World Council a more vital, living, actively communicating organization, within our organization as well as with others who have yet to become members. For example, send reports for the newsletter, long or short, so that colleagues around the world will know about and learn from what is going on in your country or region. Visit our website and respond to upcoming questions and issues that will be posted there. It is important that you talk about the World Council in your national and professional meetings, making its mission public, and enlisting new members (remember the action plan for the "one by one" program!). Make interested people aware of the next World Conference in Adelaide 2003 and the wonderful opportunity they will have

to exchange experiences and gain new expertise and knowledge.

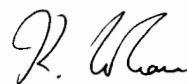
Third, the Executive Committee has found it necessary to reconsider and change a policy regarding the affiliated organizations and federations. The allowance of one complimentary registration for the World Council Biennial Conference from each affiliation has proven to cause a notable loss of money for the World Council. The rationale behind this change of policy was that while the affiliated organizations paid \$200 for a 2-year membership, one free registration cost at least \$325 for the World Council. With the increasing number of affiliates this has resulted in a remarkable amount of money lost at each conference. The Executive Committee is trying to make all necessary provisions for keeping the organization on a financially healthy basis and the reconsideration of this provision is the fiscally responsible thing to do. The affiliated organizations and federations retain the following benefits:

- A free booth at the biennial conferences
- Free advertising space in the conference program book
- Free advertising space in the Newsletter *World Gifted*
- Use of the World Council's website to announce and promote conferences and other activities
- Copies of the journal *Gifted and Talented International* and the newsletter and all World Council mailings
- Approval of applications for endorsement of conferences allows affiliated organizations and federations to use the World Council name and logo for advertising purposes.

We know you will agree that with the change, the benefits to affiliated organizations and federations are still substantial and now support both these organizations as well as the World Council.

It is our hope that we will hear from you in the coming months as you continue in your efforts to promote and support the mission of the World Council and all those it serves.

With my very best wishes,



ACCELERATION

continued from 1

Social and/or Emotional-Behavioral Outcomes

In America, researchers have been interested in the influence that acceleration has on the socio-emotional development of gifted students. Nearly 2 decades ago, Daurio stated that *preconceived opinions*, rather than facts or personal experiences, formed the basis of most of the social and emotional objections to acceleration. Results from longitudinal studies on three cohorts of students accelerated academically as part of the Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth (SMPY) showed positive psychosocial outcomes and high levels of participation satisfaction.

In an extensive study, Sayler and Brookshire found that accelerated students had better perceptions of their social relations and emotional development and fewer behavioral problems than did regular students. Accelerated eighth-graders who entered school early or skipped elementary grades did not report social isolation, emotional difficulties, or behavioral problems. The concern that acceleration usually or invariably leads to academic, social, or emotional maladjustment *was not supported*.

In Australia, few published research studies were located that addressed the socio-emotional consequences of educational acceleration. Gross concluded that acceleration resulted in more intellectual stimulation, closer and more productive social relationships, and *healthier levels of self-esteem*. Vialle and colleagues found that gifted students in Australia were happier, socially and emotionally, after their acceleration and reported a greater feeling of fulfillment and self-confidence.

Teachers' Opinions on Acceleration

Educational practitioners surveyed believed that there was a wide range of potential socio-emotional problems for students who were accelerated. It has often been reported that teachers have markedly negative perceptions of the efficacy of acceleration.

From a group of primary school teachers and a group of teacher trainees in New Zealand surveyed, the respondents were moderately positive but conservative in their views of acceleration and expressed greater concern about the social and emotional effects than about the educational effects. The apprehensions of the teachers and teacher trainees, although based on well-intentioned common sense be-

liefs, appear unfounded in terms of recent research.

Educational practitioners in Australia were reported to be resistant to the positive evidence in favor of acceleration and had campaigned actively against allowing gifted students to be placed in this educational option. Overwhelmingly, principals have rejected applications for early school entry. The most common reason for rejection related to the social and emotional development of the child. Many of the principals also believed that the child's general immaturity and physical size were reasons for non-enrollment.

Parents' Opinions on Acceleration

There appears to have been little attention given to the experience and opinions of parents on acceleration procedures. In a recent U.S. survey, all respondents were satisfied with their decision to accelerate their children and would have done so again. Five parents indicated that they should have decided to accelerate sooner. Parental involvement has been found to be a key aspect in the healthy adjustment of accelerants. In Germany parents overwhelmingly agreed that grade skipping was a successful procedure for their gifted children. Positive educational, social, and emotional benefits were reported. Studies generally indicated that parents viewed educational acceleration in a positive light.

Summary of Research

Most evidence has been obtained from basically two types of acceleration practices: early school entry and grade skipping or advancement. Hence, caution should be taken not to overgeneralize the positive outcomes reported for these two options to all types of accelerative practices. Most of the research evidence on acceleration has been obtained from studies that have measured the effects of acceleration procedures on the academic, cognitive, social, and emotional development of gifted students and has resulted in the following conclusions:

- academic outcomes of acceleration are positive

- no carefully executed research has been conducted that found negative social and/or emotional outcomes of acceleration of gifted children
- gifted children who are not intellectually stimulated and challenged may become underachievers and not fulfill their potential
- acceleration is not widely used in Canada or the United States

In spite of evidence supporting the efficacy of acceleration for gifted students, widespread resistance to the concept and practice exists among educational administrators and teachers. The current organizational structure of most schools caters to average students, with few provisions for the gifted. Teachers and administrators are generally reluctant to allow or create variances for individual students. In Victoria, government policy encourages mixed ability classrooms, and, consequently, it is the common form of educational arrangement in most schools.

Research has consistently highlighted that teachers are frequently concerned about possible detrimental social and emotional effects of acceleration practices on gifted students. Furthermore, teachers have expressed a belief that acceleration could be responsible for creating skill gaps in core curriculum areas. While very few studies were found that surveyed the opinions of parents towards the acceleration of their gifted children, their comments were predominantly positive.

Rationale for this Study

Teachers and parents appear to play critical roles in successful acceleration programs, yet their opinions have been grossly under-researched. An extensive study that investigates the opinions and attitudes of teachers and parents on key aspects of acceleration appeared warranted.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the opinions of teachers and parents of gifted primary school students concerning the educational acceleration practice of grade skipping.

Send a colleague to the World Council website at
www.worldgifted.org for information about the
organization, 2003 World Conference, publications,
and worldwide resources.



The specific aims of the study were:

Procedural Aims

- to review the relevant literature and research on giftedness and educational procedures with a special focus on acceleration
- to construct a questionnaire for teachers and parents to determine their opinions of acceleration

Research Aims

To investigate the attitudes and opinions of teachers and parents on the acceleration practice of grade skipping in order to:

- determine any overall differences between the opinions of teachers and parents
- determine any specific differences between the opinions of teachers and parents
- to provide recommendations for further research
- to provide educational recommendations as a result of the findings of the study

Methodology

To study the opinions of teachers and parents, it was determined that a survey research design was appropriate. The method used to gather information was a specially prepared mail questionnaire that has two components:

- scale items (A Likert-type 5-point scale was used)
- several open-ended questions

Twenty-six scaled questions addressed three major aspects of acceleration, policy, practice, and outcomes. Seven open-ended questions were included at the end of the scaled questions to enable the respondents to provide additional information.

The Sample

The sample was comprised of teachers and parents who had experiences with educational acceleration. Twenty-six teachers and 23 parents agreed to participate in the study and returned completed questionnaires.

Analysis of the Data

An item analysis of the questions on the Likert-type rating scale and overall differences between the comparison groups in the study were investigated using QUEST-An Interactive Test Analysis System. Using QUEST, the following analyses were undertaken:

- an item analysis of the questions on the questionnaire to determine their psychometric properties and appropriateness for the study
- analysis of the responses of the comparison groups to determine any different overall response patterns

To determine if there were any differences between the responses of the comparison groups on individual questions, two approaches were used. The first approach considered the size or magnitude of the effect expressed in standard deviation units, and in the second approach Chi-square tests were applied.

Summary of Results

In summary, statistical analyses of the data indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the global responses of teachers and parents on the 26 questions. When the responses of teachers and parents on each of the 26 items were analyzed separately, only one item produced a statistically significant different result. On the item, "Acceleration leads to positive emotional/behavioral outcomes," the major difference in the response scores was a much higher "undecided" score from the teachers.

A further investigation of the data revealed the following major trends and additional substantive similarities and differences in the responses of the teachers and parents:

- different analyses of the data confirmed the finding of substantial similarity in the opinions of teachers and parents on most issues
- both groups held qualified support for acceleration policy and practice
- teachers demonstrated a higher consensus of opinions
- teachers and parents held very similar opinions on the following issues:
 - decisions should involve teachers, parents, and the gifted student
 - acceleration leads to positive intellectual and educational outcomes
 - acceleration should be practiced in primary and secondary schools
 - acceleration is not suitable for all gifted students
 - acceleration should not be mandatory school policy
- teachers appeared more undecided on several issues, especially the benefits of acceleration
- parents were, understandably, more undecided on questions relating to information about the Australian scene and the level of support given by the Victorian government and the school community
- parents were more positive concerning social, emotional/behavior outcomes

These findings basically confirm the results of previous studies. Most studies found that teachers did not favor acceleration as the

preferred educational option for gifted students and were apprehensive about any positive social, emotional, and behavioral benefits. What is interesting is the finding that teachers recorded a high level of "undecided" rather than a high level of direct opposition to acceleration. This suggests that teachers need to be informed about research findings. Professional development programs would be a useful avenue for such information.

The findings indicating that parents were generally more supportive of acceleration than teachers accords with the outcomes of other research. Over 50 % of the cohort in the present study had positive views concerning social, emotional/behavioral outcomes. About a third of the parents, however, were undecided about the social and emotional/behavioral benefits of acceleration, with only a small percentage indicating a concern.

The additional comments made by the teachers and parents were very similar and closely correspond to the positive and negative opinions and experiences that are often raised in the literature on acceleration. The most frequently raised comments by parents and teachers were:

Positive points

- more appropriate and challenging curriculum
- student had more positive attitude to school and learning
- student showed greater motivation to learn
- opportunity to learn with "like-minded" children
- student's expression of "boredom" minimized
- happier, less frustrated parents
- happier student who felt less different
- fewer behavioral problems with student
- student expressed less learning frustration
- higher self-esteem in student
- teachers more positive
- teachers less threatened

Negative points

- negative attitude and comments from some teachers and children
- negative attitude from some of the parents
- student lost contact with previous classmates
- great expectations on student for a successful outcome
- pressure on student to succeed in all areas of the curriculum
- student made to feel different
- student resented by other students
- student teased by students in previous class

- some social difficulties experienced by student
- concerns about emotional maturity when student approaches puberty
- student's smaller physical size presents problems in sports
- student's fine-motor skills underdeveloped and can cause handwriting difficulties
- student *has less opportunity* for leadership role
- risk of student feeling a failure for the first time
- parents viewed as being "pushy"
- parents can become very anxious about appropriateness of the decision
- student can miss important "chunks" of the basic curriculum
- student can be physically exhausted at the end of the week

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the study indicated the need to increase the knowledge of teachers about the practice and consequences of educational acceleration. While the literature clearly and consistently indicate the efficacy and positive benefits of acceleration options and enthusiastically advocates its use, teachers are either *unaware or remain unconvinced* of the research findings.

Teacher education courses in Australia, especially pre-service courses, devote little or no attention to gifted education. Although a few post initial, special diplomas, or degrees are available in the field, very few regular classroom teachers enroll in such classes and are consequently not aware of the trends in the literature or the research findings.

It would seem important to make all teachers aware of the basic issues in gifted education, particularly the most appropriate educational approaches. The inclusion of such information in basic teacher education degrees is strongly recommended.

Teachers were of the opinion, which is frequently mentioned in the literature, that acceleration is not necessarily appropriate for all gifted students. Information is necessary to assist teachers knowing what factors are critical in deciding if early entry or grade skipping is the most appropriate option for a particular gifted student.

Parents of gifted children will also need to have a general appreciation of the appropriateness of different educational options. Parents should have the opportunity to join interest groups and associations that focus on gifted education and discuss important issues, such as acceleration. However, parents will still be very dependent on the knowledge and experience of their children's teachers in making decisions about their gifted children.

While the literature has promoted the positive benefits of educational acceleration, it should be stressed that acceleration alone will not necessarily lead to improved learning outcomes and other associated benefits. In its narrowest form, acceleration can be viewed as a placement decision rather than a program decision. Early entry or grade skipping is, in a sense, an easy organizational or administrative arrangement. To maximize the educational

benefits of acceleration, it is essential that the curriculum be differentiated for the gifted student. Such modification of the curriculum and changes in teaching style and instructional procedures to ensure that the special needs of gifted students are catered to, is a challenging and demanding task for teachers.

Gifted children are a nation's most precious and richest resource. Therefore, every effort should be made to assist teachers in gaining the knowledge, experience, and professional support they need to enable them to meet the exciting challenge of educating gifted students in the next millennium, with confidence and success. ■

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