



# WorldGifted

Newsletter of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children  
[www.wcgtc.org](http://www.wcgtc.org)

## COUNTDOWN TO WARWICK



*The Phoenix*

Penny Mortimer  
2007 World Conference Project Manager

The full programme for the 2007 World Conference can be downloaded from the website [www.worldgifted2007.com/programme](http://www.worldgifted2007.com/programme). All presentations are listed by day, thus enabling delegates to plan their time whilst at Warwick. Over the five days we have over 400 speakers participating in 196 sessions of workshops, papers, colloquia, symposia, and poster sessions.

The opening ceremony on Sunday, August 5 will feature a specially choreographed performance of Coventry's Godiva Sisters – celebrating the life of the famous benefactor Lady Godiva. The Sisters represent many cultural, religious, and ethnic communities and are supported by around 100 children from local schools. The images here preview this performance in which the mythical Phoenix will come to life.

To date 900 delegates and guests have registered at the opening ceremony. They will be coming from 63 countries around the world. The conference offers a wonderful opportunity for gifted and talented professionals to make new contacts and interact with colleagues from all continents.



*The Godiva Sisters*



### A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Den-Mo Tsai

Dear Members, Colleagues, and Friends,  
At the 2007 World Conference in Warwick, we will be hosting a silent auction in order to raise funds for the Barbara Clark Scholarship Fund. This scholarship provides partial fiscal support to be used toward WCGTC World Conference or Youth Summit attendance. We are appreciative of our delegates' efforts to donate items for this worthy endeavour.

I am pleased to announce that Jill Adelson is receiving funds in the amount of \$1,500 USD from the Barbara Clark Scholarship Fund to attend the 2007 World Conference in Warwick, England. Jill is a Ph.D. student in education at the University of Connecticut in the USA and very committed to gifted education. For those of you attending the upcoming conference, we will be introducing Jill to our members at the General Assembly Meeting on Wednesday, August 8, 2007.

For more information on the Barbara Clark Scholarship Fund, please see the box on page 12. You can also go to our website at [www.wcgtc.org](http://www.wcgtc.org).

The membership has elected Edna McMillan

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## UPDATE FROM HEADQUARTERS

University of Winnipeg speak with the parents in regard to issues of concern to them. Thank you to Ken McCluskey, Dean of Education, and Phil Baker, Director of the Education Access Programs, for making these two meetings so very interesting and successful. The group plans to meet again at the end of September.

As well, in co-operation with Alan Wiebe and the University's mentorship program, we were able to pair two gifted and talented children (ages 4 and 7) with mentors from the Faculty of Education in June.

### In this issue

Here, we consider some of the issues in identification and programming for our gifted and talent youth. Carole Ruth Harris, a member from the United States, brings to us the first of a two-part article addressing issues in the identification of gifted immigrant Asian-Pacific students. I offer a brief write-up of an interview I did with a young man, Gabor Lukacs, who at age 24 is a mathematics professor. We spoke on matters relating to his experience with radical acceleration and home-schooling as a youth. Florian Colceag, Delegate for Romania, updates us with a report on the introduction of a law regarding gifted education in Romania. Beatriz Zarraluqui reports on the success of a new program being offered in Florida, USA. While directed to all students, early results indicate this program to be particularly effective in creating opportunities for students in groups that are traditionally underrepresented in gifted education programs.

We include two of our regular features: news from our Seoul Office and the Warwick Conference. Chris Yoon of the WC Seoul Office tells us about some of the interesting programming they are offering for gifted and talented students. Penny Mortimer brings us a final report on the preparations underway for the 2007 World Conference at which "classroom practice and effective pedagogies" will be one of the main themes.

Finally, in this issue, we are pleased to feature our first book review done by a young person, Matthew Greene (son of Annette Greene), who reviews David White's *Philosophy for Kids*. We invite you to submit the work of the gifted and talented children in your lives as a way of celebrating our very purpose.

Lisa McLean  
Executive Administrator  
WCGTC

### 2007 World Conference

In this the final issue of *World Gifted* before the 2007 World Conference, I want to thank all those involved in the conference planning for their dedication in bringing to us, what promises to be, a memorable event from the opening ceremony through to the final day. On a personal note, I want to thank Johanna Raffan, Chair of the Program Committee for the 2007 World Conference, and her husband, Sandy, for their hospitality to me during my visit there, which extended so far as to include a morning tour in the area around Windsor Castle and neighboring sites!

I look forward to meeting many of you at the Conference!

### WC Business

The list of delegates for the 2007-2009 term has been finalized and we have included it on page 3 of this newsletter.

### Staff updates

Annette Greene is well into her second term as office assistant in the Headquarters office. She has enthusiastically taken on memberships and subscriptions, as well as editing for the newsletter, taking care of general correspondence, etc.

### Initiatives

As I reported in the April 2007 issue, Annette and I have organized a parent group that will meet monthly. So far, the group has met three times. At the past two meetings, we have had guests from the Faculty of Education at the



# Delegates 2007-2009

## World Council for Gifted and Talented Children

### ARGENTINA

Maria del Carmen Maggio

### AUSTRALIA

Susan Knopfelmacher  
Leonie Kronborg  
Margaret Plunkett  
\*Rosemary Churches

### AUSTRIA

Roswitha Bergsmann  
Waltraud Rosner  
Kornelia Tischler

### BAHRAIN

Jihan Alumran  
Tawfik A. Tawfik

### BRAZIL

Christina Cupertino  
Denise S. Fleith  
Maria Lucia Prado Sabatella

### CANADA

Janice Leroux  
Michael Pyryt  
Ken McCluskey

### CHINA

Zhengxing Gong  
Daheng Zhao  
Fei Xu

### DENMARK

Ole Kyed

### FRANCE

Monique Binda  
Jean Brunault

### GERMANY

Klaus K. Urban  
Harald Wagner  
Franz Mönks

### GREECE

Sofia Theodoridou

### HONG KONG

Sing-pui Chan  
Eunice Yuk Wong  
Ku-Yu Helen Siu Yin

### INDIA

Krishna Maitra

### INDONESIA

Evy Tjahjono

### IRELAND

Nicky O'Leary  
Leslie Graves

### ISRAEL

Miriam Barlev  
Erika Landau

### JAPAN

Nobutaka Matsumura

### JORDAN

Lalla Fatima El-Amrani  
Janette Wakileh

### NETHERLANDS

Marieke Schuurman - van  
der Heyden  
Hans H. van Elten

### NEW ZEALAND

Mary Irvine  
Roger Moltzen  
Tracy Riley

### NIGERIA

Ibrahim A. Kolo

### PERU

Manuel E. Rodriguez

### PORTUGAL

Maria Conceição Gomes  
Celeste Pinto Costa Martins

### ROMANIA

Florian Colceag

### SAUDI ARABIA

Khalid Al-Jabali  
Abdullah Al-Jughaiman

### SCOTLAND

Niamh Stack  
Margaret Sutherland

### SERBIA

Magda von Burg

### SINGAPORE

Tan Bee Geok  
Tan Liang See

### SLOVENIA

Ivan Ferbežer

### SOUTH AFRICA

Kobus Maree

### SOUTH KOREA

Seokhee Cho  
Kyung-bin Park  
Sukun Jin  
\*Doehee Ahn

### SPAIN

Yolanda Benito  
Leopoldo Carreras  
Juan Antonio Alonso

### SUDAN

Salah Eldin Farah Attallah  
Omar Khaleefa

### SWITZERLAND

Jean-Jacques Bertschi  
Marion Rogalla  
\*Marlis Eeg-Bloechliger

### TAIWAN

Ching-chih Kuo  
Wu-Tien Wu

### THAILAND

Pichak Siripoonsap  
Akaradech Yompakdee

### UNITED KINGDOM

Tony Hurlin  
Kate Niederer  
Johanna M. Raffan  
\*John Geake

### USA

Richard Cash  
Gillian Eriksson  
Julia Roberts  
\*Kathy Hargrove

\*Denotes Alternate



## Delegates

Our delegates are the essential link between each country and the work of the WCGTC.

Delegates are responsible for the following:

(i) providing HQ with updates for the newsletter and articles for the journal.

(ii) organizing the biennial elections for delegates in their countries.

(iii) reporting once a year in writing on the progress of their countries and their activities in promoting the goals of the WC to their EC liaison and HQ.

For more information on delegates and their role, you can go to our website at:

[www.wcgtc.org](http://www.wcgtc.org)

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## **The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children**

The World Council is a nonprofit international organization dedicated to the needs of gifted and talented children all over the world.

For more information, please contact us at World Council 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.

We continue to invite all members to contribute! Please report on anything that you think would interest other members, such as events or initiatives in your area or country, news about regional organizations, profiles of individual members, or announcements of upcoming events.

Please forward your submissions to World Council Headquarters c/o the University of Winnipeg.

*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. It is published twice a year. Prospective authors are requested to submit manuscripts or queries to:

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# **CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

## **August 5-10, 2007**

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children's 17th Biennial Conference  
Warwick, England, United Kingdom  
[www.worldgifted2007.com](http://www.worldgifted2007.com)

## **November 7-11, 2007**

National Association for Gifted Children's 54th Annual Convention  
Minneapolis, Mn, USA  
[www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

## **June 18-21, 2008**

Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) World Conference  
Moscow, Russia  
[www.acei.org/wldconf.htm](http://www.acei.org/wldconf.htm)

## **July 14-18, 2008**

10th Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore  
[www.apc.org](http://www.apc.org) (should be up by August 2007)

## **MEMBERSHIP OPTION: SPONSOR MEMBER**

Any member of the World Council may become a Sponsor Member by providing the membership fee for an individual who is financially unable to pay the fee, but who could benefit from a membership in the World Council. The benefiting member may be selected by the sponsor, or at the request of the sponsor, by the WC Membership Committee from applicants for Sponsorship.



# news

## FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### Report on Gifted Education Law in Romania

*In Volume 26, Number 1 of World Gifted, Florian Colceag, WC Delegate for Romania, advised readers concerning the introduction of a law which would create a legal framework for gifted education in Romania. The bill had been submitted to the Romanian Parliament on March 8, 2006, then subject to debate after which a vote was held on April 21, 2006 and the bill was approved to be adopted as law.*

Florian Colceag  
President of IRSCA Gifted Education  
President of EDU-GATE Consortium  
WCGTC Delegate, Romania

### Update

Although there was a considerable delay from its approval in April 2006, the bill was eventually adopted by both legislative bodies on December 13, 2006, and then approved by the President on January 8, 2007 to become law on January 17, 2007.

This law was particularly difficult to promote in Romania, mainly because of the communist ideology still present in the political environment, and because of the conservative approach of the Ministry of Education and Science to the proposed bill. However, our work, together with media support (TV and newspaper articles interviews; a Parliament expert panel meeting; internet activity, including an online petition; seminars on gifted education, etc.), made a tremendous difference.

I must acknowledge Dr. Klaus Urban, Dr. Den-Mo Tsai, Dr. Barbara Clark, Dr. Sally Reis, Dr. Franz Mönks, Dr. Tony

Nolan, Dr. Tim Dracup, and many other specialists for their assistance during this process. We have also had direct support from the WCGTC, ECHA, and AUSTEGA.

### The Revamping Education for Gifted and All Learners (REGAL) Plan

Beatriz Zarraluqui  
Administrative Director  
Division of Advanced Academic Programs  
Miami-Dade County Public Schools  
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The Revamping Education for Gifted and All Learners (REGAL) Plan is a Miami-Dade County Public Schools' initiative that sets forth recommendations, timelines, and a budget for the successful implementation of gifted education programs in Miami, Florida, the fourth largest urban school district in the United States. The stated aim is to raise the academic rigor in ALL classrooms, and in turn, improve the performance of ALL students. The avenue for accomplishing this task is paved by providing opportunities for both teachers and students to create academic environments that increase relevance and interest in learning, and support services that align directly with the needs of teachers and students. To this end, the REGAL Plan aspires to eliminate the achievement gap that is, to a certain degree, a reflection of minority membership and economically disadvantaged students, upon full implementation.

Now that the first year of the three-year phase-in of the REGAL Plan has been implemented at each school, the following outcomes have become evident: all schools have established new practices for identifying and serving gifted and advanced students, with a 26% increase in the number of student receiving gifted services; all schools have begun to create an environment that leads to access and equity and provides support and encouragement for all students, with an increase of 35% in African American and 26% in Hispanic student enrollment; all schools are providing an environment that supports active thinking and intellectual engagement; all teachers have begun to adopt program practices that underscore the viability and usefulness of both the know-how of special programs and the role enrichment can and should play in total school improvement; and 2,321 teachers of the gifted and advanced have engaged in high quality, sustained, and intensive professional development.

The REGAL Plan has created opportunities for identification of potentially gifted students from traditionally underrepresented groups and has begun to restructure the program to one that provides a unique, high-quality curriculum that correlates to international standards. After just one year of implementation, this reform effort has redesigned gifted education in Miami, Florida.

# IDENTIFYING GIFTED IMMIGRANT ASIAN-PACIFIC STUDENTS

Dr. Carole Ruth Harris is the director of G.A.T.E.S. Research & Evaluation, a private consulting firm for individuals and schools that has operated since 1995 in the Boston, Massachusetts area. She holds the doctorate in Curriculum and Teaching: Gifted from Teachers College Columbia University where she studied with A. Harry Passow. Formerly Associate in Education at Harvard University, she has taught education of the gifted at University of Hawaii and University of Massachusetts Lowell and is currently adjunct faculty at Northeastern University.

Dr. Harris is an active professional educator and researcher who has extensive experience as a practitioner and specialist in program development in a variety of cultural settings. She has co-authored a book on creativity (Allyn & Bacon), has published many articles and book chapters on education for the gifted and talented, and has frequently appeared as an invited and featured speaker at national and international conferences.

In this issue of *World Gifted* and the next, Dr. Harris brings an important issue to our attention, that being the identification of giftedness and talent in immigrant children from Asian-Pacific countries. Here, she overviews some of the specific issues that educators need to address in this regard.

## Identifying Gifted Immigrant Asian-Pacific Students

Carole Ruth Harris, Ed.D.

Accurate identification of giftedness in immigrant children of Asian origin should include awareness of linguistic and cultural differences, economic and attitudinal factors, peer-group

expectations, cross-cultural stress, and inter-generational conflict. Once these issues of identification are clearly understood, then intervention strategies may be addressed to those issues which would assist teachers, families, and caretakers to enable gifted immigrant children of Asian-Pacific origin to maximize their potential.

Asian-Pacific includes students of Asian origin from countries of the Pacific Rim. This includes China, Japan, Hong-Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and the Pacific Island groups of Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia. The population consists of immigrants and refugees in host countries as well as citizens of Asian-Pacific origin who have moved to a different area of their own country to where the spoken language and culture exhibit differences.

Culture, religion, and language of the home may differ markedly from the mainstream culture. Although Asian-Pacific groups are vastly different from each other, they do share some characteristics. Characteristics include strong family values, attention to courtesy, respect for elders, low risk-taking behavior, propensity to conformity, fear of socially inappropriate behavior, and hesitancy to question authority. Regard for academic success differs sharply and ranges from very low to very high with respect to ethnicity. Hospitality is highly valued and sensitivity to emotional climate prevalent.<sup>1</sup>

## Some of the Issues that Should be Addressed

Linguistic

Many Asian-Pacific children who

are gifted nevertheless often have difficulty with the language because their first language has vastly different structures in the spoken and written language, grammatical structure, and the alphabet. Unfamiliarity with the alphabet may provide a stumbling block to the acquisition of reading skills, can create an emotional barrier, and may increase feelings of isolation. This is particularly true of gifted Asian students because they are used to reading rapidly and easily, and for perhaps the first time, there is difficulty present. This is highly likely to affect self-esteem. At home there may often be limited, or even no use of the new language, with home-school interface minimal, thus further limiting language skills.

There is frequently a large gap between demonstrated superior mathematical skill and productivity in the linguistic area. Academically gifted Asian-Pacific children who excel in mathematics direct much of their intellectual energy to non-verbal areas that do not require linguistic facility in the language of the host country or area. Because overall performance is examined, Asian-Pacific gifted students are sometimes perceived as high-achieving in mathematical areas but not ready for gifted education in language-related areas, with the result that few are placed in such programs.

## Cultural

Cultural problems are intensified in the area of social customs. Asian-Pacific children do not like to "stand out" and may regard it as embarrassing if classified as gifted. Because the Asian-Pacific gifted child may be highly susceptible to emotional climate and acutely aware of cultural expectations, voice tone, eye contact and body contact or gesture can

<sup>1</sup>Harris, C.R. (1991). Identifying and serving the gifted new immigrant: Problems, strategies, implications. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 23 (4), 16-30.



be perceived as insulting, rude or laughable, precipitating introverted behavior. Sex-role problems also emerge here, with drama, dance, and sports particularly susceptible. Cultural differences in listening behavior and in response behavior, such as lowering of the eyes when addressed, or passive, seemingly unresponsive staring, may be interpreted by teachers or the child's age peers as aggressive or discourteous. If a gifted Asian child is reprimanded publicly, extreme reticence can ensue, blocking articulation, further widening the gap between verbal and non-verbal productivity. The impetus for further exploration of creative or intellectual challenge may also be absent in gifted Asian children who erect barriers to mental play and creative productivity, sometimes claiming denial of interest to "save face," or to avoid embarrassing the family.<sup>2</sup>

#### Economic

Many new Asian immigrants are below the poverty line, arrive in the host country with few financial resources, and support multiple households. In addition, the families are large and often extended, and older students work after school or care for younger siblings, with the result that some gifted Asian students perform poorly, although intellectual and creative potential may be clearly indicated. A hidden factor in this area is poor health, which could stem from limited access to health care through lack of knowledge or accessibility, sometimes because of illegal status, resulting in neglect of basic preventive care, including immunization procedures.

#### Attitudinal

Gifted Asian children in non-Asian countries can manifest acute feelings of isolation and perceived "differentness" in appearance and

ability. Some may have residual trauma from war experiences, coupled with fear and mistrust of authority exacerbated by family attitude and past experience. An Asian immigrant whose family came to the host country for economic betterment, or as a result of leaving an untenable political situation, has a vastly different attitude from one who is a refugee and comes to escape from danger. Rather than risking the perception of possible parental disapproval and disappointment if there is failure to be accepted into a gifted program, talents are sometimes deliberately hidden. The high self-expectation and perfectionism typical of gifted children coupled with family pressure to achieve can result in plummeting self-esteem, further isolating the gifted Asian child.<sup>3</sup>

#### Sociocultural Peer Expectations

Racial conflict, internalization of racial prejudice, and fear of personal safety are factors in creating barriers to identifying and serving gifted Asian children. There is a dividing line between the aspirations of illegal immigrants and other groups, including refugees, and differing expectations economically, psychologically, and politically. Reluctance to investigate alternative thinking strategies may be curtailed by the status of both the family and the child and many gifted Asian students will contain themselves within perceived boundaries according to family ethos and expectations of family respect behaviors.<sup>4</sup>

#### Cross-cultural Stress

Some gifted Asian students manifest special problems in accepting new cultural modes of thinking and will frequently appear inattentive to their own originality and creative potential, resisting new approaches to problem-solving that utilize non-traditional approaches. Sex-role related problems are often a factor in cross-cultural

stress, exacerbated by the expectation that classroom instruction is a male activity. Further, Asian may be broadly defined from the point of view of the school, more so in Western countries, with differences in aspiration among ethnic groups not taken into account. Perceptions of what constitutes giftedness in the school and/or the family and ethno-community setting may therefore differ sharply, creating conflict in loyalties within the immediate and larger communities.

#### Intergenerational Conflict

This extends from the placing of responsibility on gifted young children who act as interpreters for their families to a shift in cultural values between generations. On the one hand, the newly acculturated children and youth may resent the dependence of the elders, while on the other, the elder generation may be concerned that the children and youth are disassociating themselves with the old traditions. This produces a double stress resulting in coping strategies that have a negative effect on self-concept, on family relationships, and on manifestation of accepted gifted characteristics. Productivity with new ideas in the school setting may seem offensive to traditional cultural values and place the gifted Asian child in an untenable position. There may be shifts in perceived behavioral requirements, with the emotionally vulnerable gifted child assuming roles that reflect cultural values adjusted to peers and teachers on the one hand, and family members among three generations on the other hand: grandparents adhering to old traditions, parents balancing social and workplace requirements, and siblings becoming acculturated and adjusted to the new environment.

#### School System Conflict

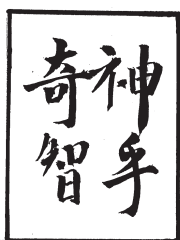
Misplacement in schools, with the placements made according to

<sup>2</sup>Trueba, H. T. (1988). Culturally based explanations of minority students' academic achievement. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 19, 270-287.

<sup>3</sup>Wei, T. (1983). The Vietnamese refugee child: Understanding cultural differences. In D. Omark & J. Erickson (Eds.). *The Bilingual Exceptional Child*. San Diego: College-Hill Press.

<sup>4</sup>Portes, A., McLeod, S. A., Jr., & Parker, R.N. (1978). Immigrant aspirations. *Sociology of Education*, 51, 241-260.

chronological age rather than level of education, is one of the more severe problems in identification of giftedness for this population. Asian immigrant students may have had little or sporadic schooling, possibly even no schooling prior to coming to the new country. Such misplacement is aggravated by the lack of school records, and nothing on which to base information. The problem is often not solely attributable to school authorities, because many children hide facts about years spent in the former school to save face. Gifted Asian children are frequently tracked into second language classes, take vocational courses, or study academic subjects that do not require verbal skills. On the other side of the coin may be seen a very high barrier to proper placement erected by the parents of Asian children who mistrust any kind of enrichment and regard it, by and large, as trivial. Further, field-dependent learning styles are frequently open to misunderstanding as many Asian cultures do not foster independent work but emphasize group cooperation, team effort, obedience, and respect.



Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,  
That is the whistle of the wind, it is not  
my voice,  
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of  
the spray,  
Those are the shadows of leaves.  
  
Walt Whitman, from  
"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"

**Next Issue of *World Gifted*:  
Strategies that Address these  
Issues and Recommended Reading**

## YOUR WORLD COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

In an effort to familiarize you with the members of our Executive Committee, we are featuring the biographies of members of the EC in each issue. Here, we profile a long-standing member of the Executive Committee, Dr. Sandra Kaplan, who continues to be very active in our organization and in the world community of gifted education.



### **Dr. Sandra Kaplan**

Sandra Kaplan is a clinical professor in the School of Education, University of Southern

California and a national and international leader in the field of gifted education. She has spent much of her professional life advocating for the education of gifted children, including terms as president of both the California Association for the Gifted (CAG) and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), and she is frequently called upon as a consultant for special projects. Currently the recipient of two nationally funded Javits grants on gifted education, her research efforts are in the areas of appropriate curriculum and teacher training as well as student responses to that curriculum. She is the author of numerous books, articles, and chapters in anthologies related to education of the gifted and talented.

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# INTERVIEW WITH GABOR LUKACS

Last fall, one of the local newspapers ran a headline that caught my attention: “Math prodigy not much older than many of those he teaches.” The article was about a young man, Gabor Lukacs, who at the age of 24 is a math professor at the University of Manitoba here in Winnipeg (Canada). It went on to say that at age 12, he had gone from Grade 6 to university, and that by age 16 had completed his Masters degree and started his Ph.D. I was fascinated and really wanted to meet him.

I sent an e-mail and was pleased to hear back from “Gabi” as he calls himself. He was willing to do an interview for the newsletter. I was impressed by how down-to-earth, even friendly, he sounded in his reply.

The newspaper article had discussed Gabi’s teaching in detail and had really managed to convey his passion for it. In meeting him, though, I was struck by his passion for life generally: for classical music, for poetry, for aviation, etc. (He reads books about flying and would someday like to get his pilot’s license. For now, he draws on his understanding of aviation in the analogies he uses for explaining math concepts to his students.)

While I had the sense that he would be interesting to speak with on virtually any subject, for our purposes, I wanted to ask him about his own education and his views on providing for gifted and talent youth.

*-How old were you when your talent was first recognized?*

He thought it would have been in Grade 6. (Surprisingly, he recalls not being a very good student in Grade 4!)

*-The newspaper article indicated that you were accelerated from Grade 6 to university. How did that come about?*

It turns out that it was a little more complicated than that. He’d actually been accelerated to Grade 8. Early in the year, however, there was an incident with some of the older kids who were bothering him. He had instinctively defended himself (with chemicals!). In view of the situation which resulted, it wasn’t appropriate for him to continue in the class, which, as he says, was good in the sense that it provided “a legitimate excuse for him to stay at home to study.”

He spent that year at home with his dad, listening to classical music and studying. What surprised me was that even though he wasn’t in a formal school setting, he remembered his study as being very structured, i.e., “clear, planned, and directed,” because he was preparing to take the high school matriculation exam. It’s clear from what he says that he thrived during this time.

During that year, he also took one university course in set theory before going full-time the following year. He talked

a bit about what it was like to be such a young person in university, and recalled how it was that each time he would start a new course, the other students would be “shocked” by his age. He said that there was some teasing, but he didn’t take it “personally.”

Not surprising to anyone who has worked with gifted youth is the fact that he actually found that he could relate better to the older students than he could to his age-mates. (His dad says that he “was born a grown-up.”) He had more in common with them, liking as they did classical music and poetry; in contrast, he described relating to his age-mates as an exercise in trying to “understand their world.”

He made a number of friends, one of whom is presently doing a Ph.D. in mathematics at Stanford.

*-I indicated that where funding for programming for the gifted and talented is concerned, some people believe that “the gifted will get by on their own” and, therefore, do not need special programming. I asked him to comment on that.*

He has some strong feelings in this regard. First, he thinks that some well-intentioned intervention can be “harmful.” As an example, he described how his first full year of university was prescribed for him, i.e., only three courses which were chosen for him. He feels that with rigid programming that is imposed on students in this way, there is a “risk of blocking” the student’s potential.

Second, by far the most helpful, he says, were the people/organizations that asked “how can we help you?” He credits one organization in particular which gave him a computer in 1996 – something that he would otherwise not have been able to afford. Having a computer benefited him greatly, e.g., he was able to learn programs such as Linux, do his papers on it, etc.

*-What would you recommend for really young students who are gifted and talented?*

He considers “support from the home to be critical.” He says that when a child is accelerated, it is important that the child not be a scholar at school, but be “a child at home in terms of competence.” He himself was raised by a loving father with whom he had a close relationship, but was brought up to be responsible for himself. From Gabi’s experience, he’s found that “if you let a child take responsibility, the child will deliver.”

In this regard, it is interesting to note that where the decision to study at home was concerned, Gabi’s father felt that Gabi had a “solid plan” and was, therefore, willing to let him take the risk of this non-traditional approach to his education. Recall that Gabi was only 12 years old at the time!

*-What encouragement would give to the young and profoundly gifted, especially those who live in situations where there isn't financial means?*

Using a student of mathematics as an example, he suggests, essentially that the student do what he had done, i.e., self-directed learning; the student could set out to learn university math. He notes that if a student has access to the Internet, there are lots of online resources. There are all kinds of books available as well – new and used. He cautions that mathematics, in particular, is hierarchical, and that it is important to have the foundations: geometry, algebra, and calculus. It may be helpful in this regard to have the support of a mentor to guide the student.

*-What keeps you grounded?*

In response to this question, he quoted a line by his favorite poet, Hungarian Jzsef Attlila, from his poem *Ars poetika*: “*Weigh yourself against the universe.*” This line has him think in terms of what you can do with your life. In his life as a teacher, he has a real sense of how short life is, calculating it in terms of the number of years he has to teach, how many semesters, etc.

*I brought our interview to a close by asking about his future in academia.*

Gabi notes that he hasn't yet “had his big breakthrough” (in terms of research). He uses an analogy to convey his sense of where he's at. Getting a job, he notes, was significant and he has “been taxiing on a runway. Now it's time to take off.”

## THE WCGTC SEOUL OFFICE

The Seoul Office is located at Kon-Kuk University in Seoul, Korea. Dr. Sagan Jin and Dr. Chris Yoon are the Co-Directors.

Dr. Chris Yoon forwards the following update.

### 1. Winter Camp at Kaohsiung, Taiwan: January 27-February 4, 2007

The WCGTC Seoul Office, in collaboration with Taiwan National Science and Technology Museum (NSTM) in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, successfully implemented its first winter camp from January 27-February 4, 2007. Taiwan NSTM hosted the camp and provided well-designed science programs for gifted students in Grades 5 to 8 from South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States. Drs. Chris Yoon and Sagan Jin plan to report their program evaluation results during the World Conference this summer in Warwick, England.

### 2. The Second Winter Camp at Kaohsiung, Taiwan

We are planning to do a second Winter Camp with Taiwan National Science Museum, along with support from Kyung-Ki Unified School District (the second largest school district in Korea). It will be held in late January of 2008.

### 3. National Competition of Creative Mathematical Problem Solving

This summer, the Seoul Office is organizing a national creative math competition in Korea, sponsored by Chosun Daily Newspaper, a major newspaper in Korea, and Creative Math and Science (CMS), an education franchise corporation. We anticipate having more than 5000 students participating in the competition this year. The Seoul Office plans to expand this competition to an international event in the year 2009.

### 4. Teacher Training Institute at Kon-Kuk University, Korea: Spring 2008

Drs. Chris Yoon and Sagan Jin are developing a one-year professional development institute for Korean teachers. We are planning to start this institute in the spring of 2008. The institute will be offered in collaboration Kon-Kuk University, Seoul, Korea.

This one-year program will consist of two regular semesters at Kon-Kuk University in Seoul and one summer workshop overseas. Upon completion of the program, participants will receive a certificate signed by the presidents of Kon-Kuk University and the WCGTC. We are planning to start this institute in the spring of 2008.

If anyone has questions regarding these events, please contact Dr. Chris Yoon (cyoon@apu.edu) or Dr. Sagan Jin (sagan@paran.com).

# WC BOOK REVIEWS

Review of *Philosophy for Kids*

by David A. White

Prufrock Press, Inc. (2001), 199 pages

Reviewed by: Matthew Lee Greene

Age 14

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada



The topic of philosophy has long been overlooked by those in my age group – teenagers. When talking about philosophy our minds immediately think of people sitting around with nothing better to do than to just think (and at one time I even thought that). However, reading *Philosophy for Kids*, like many other books in the world, changed my opinion and perception. While reading the book, I became a philosopher myself and realized how different it was from what my original thoughts had been.

The book has two main purposes and it meets the expectations of each of these extremely well. The first and most obvious purpose is in a classroom environment. It seems that this could be the kind of book that a teacher could use as enrichment for those who were interested, or as a textbook for a whole unit by itself. For this use, it has more than enough substantial material. It also gives the teacher suggestions as to how to present it to a class along with certain activities to do with each question. Because of the “easy to teach and easier to learn approach to the book,” it seems perfectly fit to teach in a school environment – indeed, it is almost intended to be.

The other purpose is, as the author clearly states in the book, for kids just to have fun while thinking about anything and everything. White suggests that the activities that go along with the questions can be ignored, or skimmed over, if a kid just wants to read the book. The book is organized extremely well and kids would be able to easily find what they are interested in and just read

about that. If a kid was interested in just learning a little bit about philosophy, just getting an introduction before all of the really in-depth stuff, then this is a great book to read.

Although I didn’t find philosophy all that intriguing before reading this book, it was still easy for me to enjoy it. However, I can see what it would be like if the book was forced upon someone who was not “philosophically inclined” (although I do not recommend the book being forced upon kids, especially with a topic like philosophy). Being required to read it might be like the loose tooth I have been trying to get rid of, I just want to get it over and done with. This could be the case for students who do not find philosophy interesting and just want to get the book finished with, not thinking as they read it, and therefore, taking away from the brilliance of the book. For this reason, teachers might want to use the book in a separate group with kids who showed an interest for it.

White truly knows his intended audience. Throughout the book a light-hearted feel is present with a “no-pressure” attitude so as not to overwhelm the student. The analogies, vocabulary, and manner of speaking used are perfect to keep the reader interested and to not bore them with “adult-language.” This is vital if the book is to be used in a classroom setting and even more so if a child chooses to read it for fun.

So, however you want to utilize the book, it fits the part. Not only that, it serves its intended purposes very well. Whichever purpose you seek in this insightful book, it will not let you down.

## Would you like to review a book for *World Gifted*?

If so, please contact Headquarters at 204.789.1421 or [worldgt@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:worldgt@uwinnipeg.ca). We’re always looking for interested contributors.



## President's Message

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(Canada) and Ngarmmars Kasemset (Thailand) to the Executive Committee. Edna McMillan is currently the Treasurer on the Executive, while Ngarmmars Kasemset will be new to the Executive. We are grateful to them for making this four-year commitment to our organization. Thank you as well to our members for taking the time to vote in the election.

I wish you all the best and hope to see you at the Conference.

### NOTICE:

#### **Journal Gifted and Talented International**

The **submission guidelines** have been updated. Please see the website at <http://www.worldgifted.ca/international.html> for the details.

Thank you to Dr. Taisir Subhi Yamin for taking the time to keep these current.

## Barbara Clark Scholarship Fund

Dr. Barbara Clark, Professor Emeritus, California State University at Los Angeles has been an advocate and tireless worker for the World Council since 1987. In 2001, the Barbara Clark Scholarship Fund was created to commemorate her years of dedication to the World Council. This scholarship provides partial fiscal support to be used toward WCGTC World Conference or Youth Summit attendance, such as registration fees, housing, and/or transportation.

**Selection Criteria:** A dedicated educator or gifted youth who is involved in gifted and talented education—a researcher, professor, classroom teacher, or other educational professional or student—who can demonstrate financial need such as citizenship in an emerging nation or a nation that prohibits use of funds outside of that country, or other financial hardship. The educator must show a long-term commitment to gifted and talented education.

### Moving?

If you're moving, please contact us with your new address!

You can call or e-mail Headquarters as follows:  
phone 204.789.1421  
[worldgt@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:worldgt@uwinnipeg.ca)

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