



# A Different Drummer

*The Publication of the Oregon Association for Talented and Gifted*

Summer 2000

Volume XVI, Issue 3

## **A Chat with Dr. Laura Pehkonen**

**By Margaret DeLacy**

*The Oregon Department of Education recently announced the appointment of Dr. Laura Pehkonen as Oregon's TAG and Special Program Consultant. Dr. Pehkonen brings years of experience in talented and gifted education to the position. The following is a series of questions on issues of great importance to the future of talented and gifted education in the state:*

### **Can you tell us about your educational and professional background?**

I am a graduate of Jefferson High school in Portland, with B.S., Ed.M., and Ph.D. degrees from Oregon State University (UO Joint campus for Ph.D.). I had elementary teaching experience in Palo Alto; was a media specialist in Palo Alto; a TAG teacher in Albany while completing my doctorate in education with emphasis in gifted education with Psychology and English doctoral minors. I designed and implemented TAG in Corvallis from 1981 to 1990; was Director and Co-Director of the Future Problem Solving Program in Oregon; served as Odyssey of the Mind Regional Coordinator and on the state board; and worked on the development of Oregon State University's Adventures in Learning and taught in that program. I taught summer graduate courses in gifted education at Western Oregon and OSU and University of Helsinki; did gifted consulting in British Columbia, Wales, and several states; and was the TAG Coordinator at Pasadena Unified School District for four years. I have taught gifted and talented grades 3 - 9 in regular and Saturday programs; taught courses for gifted endorsements required in Ohio and Kentucky — Xavier, University of Kentucky; and was the full time state consultant for gifted education for the Kentucky Department of Education for five years.

### **How did you become interested in TAG education?**

While working as a media specialist in a school on the Stanford campus where nearly three-fourths of the students were identified as gifted, I was asked to provide special services specifically to challenge these students. I was excited by what they could do and their eagerness to learn; what a delight to see their excitement when challenged.

### **What programs did Kentucky have for gifted students? How does Oregon compare?**

Kentucky requires that gifted children be identified and receive appropriate services K-12 in all categories of giftedness — intellectual; specific academic aptitude in reading/language arts, social studies, science, and/or math; creativity; leadership; visual and performing arts including drama, dance, music, and visual arts. Teachers who have gifted children in their classrooms must have training in gifted education. Gifted specialists who provide

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*Editor of A Different Drummer*

**Darlene Robinson**

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## What's Wrong with my Child?

By Paula Prober, M.S.

My six-year-old son isn't normal. At home he's reading *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, and beating his older brother at chess, but at school they say he's hyperactive and can't do simple addition. At home he talks endlessly about the existence of black holes and shows enormous empathy for people in distress, but at school he's withdrawn and says the kids tease him because he forgets to tie his shoes. It's been a year since his gerbil died and he still grieves and asks me about the meaning of life and death. What's wrong with him?

What's "wrong" with him may be that he's gifted. And giftedness is complex, hard to define, and controversial. These children can be misunderstood and misdiagnosed. They may be advanced in some areas and not in others. They may appear to be socially immature when, in fact, they're upset that their peers don't play by the rules or that the other six-year-olds don't care about animal rights. The more gifted they are, the greater the differences from peers. Parents often are frustrated and isolated because of the widespread belief that precocious kids are easy to raise. They aren't.

Imagine the seven year old child who has an insatiable appetite to learn everything yesterday, who can't make a decision because she thinks of too many possible options, who sobs in frustration at not being able to draw like Van Gogh, who challenges the ethics of your decision to eat meat, who can find eight logical reasons why staying up past 10 p.m. enhances her self-esteem, who knows more about Greek mythology than you, who remembers every promise you ever broke, who is particularly sensitive to smells, sounds, clothing texture, colors, criticism, your moods, change, and the 5 o'clock news. When most children feel sad, or mad, or happy, these kids are in despair, raging, or ecstatic. At an early age, they are often aware of injustice in worlds well beyond the family and they feel helpless to affect change.

Loneliness is very real for these children. If their intelligence threatens those around them and if their love of ideas and passion for learning isn't shared, it can result in a great sense of loss, especially if the child begins to hide her abilities. At an early age, precocious youngsters can be highly critical of themselves and others. This may be a sign of low self-esteem or it may reflect the child's inner need for precision, balance, beauty, and harmony, a type of positive perfectionism. The child who lines up his shoes in the closet, alphabetizes her books, cries at a magnificent sunset, or is enraged by racism may be demonstrating this trait.

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### SCHOOL DISTRICT MEMBERSHIPS

School districts are invited to purchase a District Membership. The cost is:

**\$80 per year.**

Four staff members will receive full membership privileges, including a subscription to *A Different Drummer* and free admission to the Fall OATAG Conference. Additional professional memberships may be arranged at the same time for \$20 per individual.

(DeLacy/continued from page 1)

services beyond the regular classroom teacher must have an endorsement in gifted education (12 semester hours, including a three hour practicum). Services to gifted students must be matched to their needs, including social/emotional; must ensure continuous progress in diagnosed areas through high school; must have multiple service delivery options in a district. For example, the intellectually gifted have a research based need to have regular “safe” interaction with other intellectually gifted children. This would necessitate that they have time by themselves with a gifted specialist in a setting such as a pull-out or special class. Underachieving gifted students may need to have special counseling. To ensure continuous progress, some students may need to attend classes in another building (elementary to middle, at a college, on the internet, with a mentor, etc.). One delivery option cannot meet all of the needs. Individual districts and site-based councils determine service models, but must meet state requirements for multiple services, services matched to needs, and the specific requirement that gifted students must be grouped for instruction by ability, interest, and need. All services must further develop the identified area of giftedness. Gifted students must have an individual gifted services plan which is not the same as an IEP, but does specify what specific needs are being addressed and by whom. Schools must provide progress reports on the gifted student services plan to parents at least twice a year. Primary students are selected to participate in a primary talent pool and must have services to nurture areas of diagnosed high potential, but are not formally identified until grade

four. There are for specially students during the governor’s being developed for math and science allowing them to school

***Oregon has 42,250 students identified with an annual budget of just over \$100,000 — that’s about \$2.82 per gifted child per year.***

governor’s schools selected high school summer and a new residential school the state’s very top high school students, compress high requirements and

complete two years of college requirements while of high school age, but housed and instructed on a college campus. These options are funded by the state with a special allocation, not part of the regular gifted education programs state allocation.

Oregon’s requirement that identified gifted students must be instructed at the appropriate level and rate is comparable to Kentucky’s requirement for a continuous progress challenging curriculum, except that the requirement in Kentucky extends through high school — if a student is gifted in math, the school must continue to provide services to further develop that ability. This may mean special mentorships, taking college classes, providing distance learning, etc. In Oregon the high school must provide appropriate level and rate for the courses they offer. ***Oregon schools MAY identify and serve in areas other than intellectual and academic; Kentucky SHALL (must) (terms in regulations).*** Preservice training in gifted education, differentiating instruction (matching curriculum to students to ensure continuous progress and maximizing potential) is not required in either state. However, in Kentucky classroom teachers who have gifted children in their classrooms are required to have training (professional development, on-going consultation with a gifted specialist, and/or graduate coursework and workshops), and universities are responding to the need to incorporate working with diverse learners (that includes those whose prior knowledge and abilities differ from the average), as experienced teacher expectations (and continued certification) require teacher skills in this area. Three universities in Kentucky have centers for gifted education and all teach courses in gifted education; most offer courses each semester and during the summer; two or three offer a master’s degree in gifted education. There are very few university courses on gifted education in Oregon, and those I have found seem to be short courses in summer. I have not found any course in gifted education offered as an elective in regular sessions. (I haven’t seen all catalogs, but I have not heard of any.)

**How does funding for TAG in Oregon compare to what is being done in other states?**

Kentucky has a mandate and some funding to supplement local district gifted and talented education budgets. The current annual budget is just over \$6.7 million; local districts receive 94% with the remainder for state

initiatives such as model gifted/talented sites; special gifted/talented teacher training academies; regional gifted/talented resource libraries, etc. Because Kentucky requires identification and services for five areas, they have more identified gifted students — approximately 95,000. That works out to about \$66 per gifted student. Districts are requesting an increase in state funding, as this is really insufficient to meet needs. *Oregon has 42,250 students identified with an annual budget of just over \$100,000 — that's about \$2.82 per gifted child per year*; no funds supplemental to the state school funds provided for every student are sent to local districts. The average state allocation among mandated states (35 out of 43 reporting in the 1998-99 *State of the States Gifted and Talented Education Report*) is \$239.30 per child (this does not include two states that have unusually high funding — Georgia with over \$1 million per identified child and Mississippi with \$917,000, nor states that did not provide figures; it represents 16 of the mandated states). Neighboring states with mandates provide funding at the following levels — Washington - \$125.04 per child — \$6.2 million annually; Idaho - \$60.59 per gifted child — \$500,000 annually; Montana - \$17.17 per gifted child — \$150,000 annually. It must be kept in mind, however, that comparisons are complicated by differences in educational intents which influence funding.

### **Are TAG programs being offered throughout the state?**

TAG programs are required in every school district. Why do you think that gifted education is important? Do we really need TAG programs? It is reckless to risk wasting potential to solve complex problems that affect humanity. Research suggests that TAG students often do not do well academically or emotionally without special services which address their unique needs.

### **Isn't TAG education elitist?**

If we truly believe that all children should have an equal opportunity to develop their potential — it is elitist to deny some children the opportunity to learn and develop. If learning experiences and services to gifted children are matched to meet their unique needs and not special privileges, that is not elitist. For example, if gifted children are given the opportunity to go on a field trip or participate in an activity which is appropriate for all children and does not meet a special need, that is elitist. Generic field trips such as one to a planetarium to hear a presentation typically given to other children of this age are appropriate for all children. It would be elitist to only allow TAG students to attend. However, if this were a group of gifted students who had been doing some advanced research on some astronomical phenomenon and were scheduled to use some special instruments and/or discuss their theories and findings with an astronomer at the planetarium, this experience would be matched to the needs of these students and would not be appropriate for a general fifth grade population — therefore not elitist. ***If services are matched to needs and not treated as rewards for being bright, they are not elitist.*** Denying an appropriate education to children because they are gifted is elitist — some have termed it as educational malpractice.

### **Aren't all children gifted?**

All children are gifts, but all children are not gifted. The strengths of each child should be nurtured and developed. Strengths are on a continuum; those at the extremes require special approaches to ensure developing their potential in any area. Gifted children are not gifted in everything.

### **Why should TAG children have extra services? Won't they succeed anyway?**

This is one of the most pernicious of myths — TAG students have some very unique needs and vulnerabilities which all too often prevent them from developing their gifts. Over 60% of intellectually gifted children become underachievers before age nine — especially if they have not had appropriate services delivered by teachers and counselors trained in meeting their needs.

## Doesn't every teacher deserve to have gifted children in his/her classroom?

TAG students are learners, not reinforcers. Sprinkling gifted children most often results in putting them in a position of having no friends — no other child to feel connected to in the way they think and feel, no other child to challenge and stimulate their thinking and learning. The practice of assigning one or a few gifted children to each teacher at a grade level also limits the strategies and options for the teacher to use in order to provide effective learning activities for these students. Unfortunately, this practice often results in using the gifted child as a tutor, rather than providing meaningful educational and positive social-emotional development experiences.

## Can't the TAG children learn by teaching other children?

TAG students often are not good teachers — they make intuitive leaps in their thinking and expect others to do likewise; consequently, they do not explain well and omit steps others need for understanding. Also, when gifted children are put into “teaching” roles, they are missing the opportunity to learn new things. Brain research supports the need to deal with in new ways to enhance development. It is also remember that gifted feel like they don't fit children; putting them adult can further from their age peers. In some situations, however, gifted children can benefit from teaching others — for example, teaching another interested child to play chess. All children, including gifted children, have a right to direct instruction by a trained, qualified teacher.

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## Is ability grouping a good idea? Isn't tracking bad?

The terms ability grouping and tracking are often incorrectly used interchangeably. Flexible grouping for instruction by ability and need facilitates continuous progress. Tracking is fixed and does not allow for students to move in and out of an instructional setting based on their needs and interests. All children should have an equal opportunity to learn; equal opportunity does not mean every child should be on the same page or progress at the same rate. *All children must have instruction that requires them to put effort into their learning, thus instruction must be at a level of complexity that challenges them.* Students who do not have to work at learning often develop an attitude that everything should be easy. Such an attitude can result in students who back away from anything requiring effort, do not build confidence to approach difficult tasks, and do not develop study habits necessary for success in college.

*Margaret DeLacy is the President of Portland School District's Talented and Gifted Advisory Committee and a member of the OATAG Board. Ms. DeLacy is President of the Northwest Independent Scholar's Association and the parent of three gifted children.*

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In certain ways, then, precocious kids are more vulnerable than others are. In an unstable home, their sensitivities can lead to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and even suicide. The intellect can mask fear, despair, and the pressure she places on herself to save the family. Even in a counseling setting, these children may be misunderstood because they can analyze a situation and articulate a problem so well that the counselor misses the deeper issues.

How might we better meet the needs of these youngsters? If we understood and valued giftedness, how would our society benefit?

- o **Listen to and acknowledge your child's feelings and brainstorm a list of healthy ways to express emotion. Be honest about your level of comfort with his expressiveness.**
- o **Give her plenty of warning before a transition and provide periodic reminders. These children can get absorbed in an activity or connected to a person and can find change difficult.**
- o **If he's easily overstimulated, you may need to leave an event early. Allow time for him to observe a new situation before having to participate.**
- o **Reduce or eliminate her exposure to the newspaper, radio, and TV news.**
- o **Allow your son to play with girls and dolls if this is his choice. Don't be afraid to show him your affection.**
- o **Brainstorm solutions to problems together.**
- o **Nourish yourself and your partnership and you'll be modeling self-respect.**
- o **When you find yourself over-reacting repeatedly to your child's behaviors, take the time to examine yourself. You might just be exhausted or your child may be triggering an unresolved issue from your past. The best thing you can do for her is to heal the wounds from your own childhood.**
- o **Read Sally Walker's *The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids* and Streznewski's *Gifted Grownups*.**

***Paula Prober, M. S., is a licensed professional counselor in private practice in Eugene, Oregon, specializing in counseling and consulting with gifted adults, youth, and families. She can be reached at (541) 683-7167.***

This article is reprinted with permission from the author and was first published in the Eugene Register-Guard in November of 1999.

# What's Your Opinion?

## DUNCE LESSONS

*How TV shows make intelligence appear really dumb.  
'It's cool to be the fool' is the message too often sent by TV sitcoms, educators say.*

By Noel Holston

What's worse than mindless TV? TV that encourages ignorance. And the truly insidious thing, according to concerned educators, is that even clever programs can convey the dangerous notion that wanting to learn is uncool.

Case in point, the youth-oriented comedy "Malcolm in the Middle," a critical and popular success since its debut a month ago on Fox. Quirkily filmed and shrewdly acted, "Malcolm" can be very funny. But it's also a full-frontal mockery of teachers and bright, achievement-oriented youngsters.

Middle-schooler Malcolm, discovered in the pilot episode to have a 165 I.Q., continued to act as if being tapped for his school's gifted program is tantamount to getting 30 years in a Turkish prison. He disdains his fellow whiz kids, who are portrayed as odd-looking, clumsy and wimpy.

In an episode that revolved around Malcolm's grudging participation in the gifted program's "academic circus," his mother expressed her eagerness to meet his new friends. "They're not my friends," Malcolm snapped. "They're a bunch of geeks and losers."

The well-meaning ditz who heads the gifted program fell to pieces when the event went awry. She had to be consoled by Malcolm, 11, as her tears streaked her clown makeup (yes, she was a literal Bozo).

But "Malcolm" is only a fresh and relatively blatant example of TV's negative portrayal of the classroom experience. Long gone are the days of "Room 222," when teachers were compassionate, dedicated and respected, and "Head of the Class," which humanized it's "eggheads" rather than parodying them.

Even as we fret over kids' inability to pass fundamentals tests and wonder what we can do to improve academic performance, TV and movies frequently foster indifference to learning by presenting teachers and motivated students in an unappealing light.

The clueless teacher isn't just a staple of teen-exploitation series such as "Clueless." This cliché also shows up in more respected shows, such as "My So-Called Life" and "The Wonder Years," where Ben Stein transplanted his academic-zombie schtick wholesale from the movie "Ferris Bueller's Day Off."

Richard Olenchak, who heads the Center for Talented and Gifted at the University of Houston, cited "The Simpsons" as a consistent offender. "I think 'The Simpsons' overall presents a horrid view of education," he said. "It's almost like a backlash by rednecks."

"The typical image of teachers is stereotypical, and they're mostly pejorative - the bore, the absent-minded professor, the lecherous faculty member," said Steve Schroeder-Davis, coordinator of gifted services for the Elk River school district and a frequent lecturer on media literacy. "Many of them are simply incompetent to the point of supposedly being comical."

Academic ambition takes it on the chin and the shins. “Almost all (bright students) are made to look unpopular and clumsy, as if intellect and athleticism were mutually exclusive,” Schroeder-Davis said. “Being smart itself is not a handicap as long as it’s not applied to work. But if you’re willing to do what the teacher asks or you read a book or you have an intellectual discussion, you’re almost immediately cast as a pariah.”

Meanwhile, disinterest is glamorized. “In general, the kids who don’t do their homework, finesse the teacher, create things at the last minute to look as if they’ve done the assignment, also happen to be the stars of the sitcoms. They’re the ones who are good looking and get dates and are revered,” Schroeder-Davis said.

He could have been talking about the WB’s “Popular,” which purports to spoof the shallow values of high school popularity-seeking, but often ends up wallowing in them. In “Popular,” school exists as a mating ground, and even the supposedly unattractive kids are cute.

Schroeder-Davis acknowledges that there’s “a germ of reality in the fact that being highly intelligent or scholarly can make you unpopular or a marginalized student.” But he also knows full well that’s hardly the whole truth.

“What students are constantly seeing magnifies the stereotype they may have been growing up with anyway. So, just as it becomes “in” to wear designer clothes, it also becomes not “in” to be studious. Part of it is that studiousness implies that you respect authority and you like adults.”

“It’s stereotyping of the Olenchak. “Being a find the portrayals sad.”

Obviously, there’s a long-tradition of anti-anti-intellectualism in play

consistently embraced brash, convention-flaunting “bad boys” - from Huck Finn to Bart Simpson - rather than scholars. Still, this is not just the same-old same-old.

***“Almost all (bright students) are made to look unpopular and clumsy, as if intellect and athleticism were mutually exclusive.”***

lowest order,” said psychologist, I really

standing American authoritarianism and here. We’ve

Kids and teens have been identified as a multibillion-dollar “niche” market, and the makers of TV shows aggressively pander to their prejudices and exploit their vulnerabilities. The abundance of intellectual adults in teen oriented TV and movies is hardly accidental.

But knowing what pushes kids’ buttons is not the same as knowing, and respecting, what’s good for them. It shouldn’t be too much to ask that the creators of youth-oriented entertainment consider the attitudes they cumulatively endorse and, if they’re unhealthy, make the necessary adjustments. It would be good citizenship.

Unfortunately, purveyors of entertainment are notoriously resistant to taking responsibility for the social impact of anything larger than their own work, if that.

What, then, can be done? Schroeder-Davis said that since he wouldn’t want to be a censor, even if he could, he simply seizes every opportunity to remind people “to be aware of these images, to comment on these images, to rebut these when they need it.”

He also likes to quote the conclusion drawn by Laurence Steinberg in “Beyond the Classroom,” an ambitious 1996 study of academic achievement in high schools. “No curricular overhaul, no instructional innovation, no toughening of standards, no rethinking of teacher training or compensation will succeed if students do not come to school interested in, and committed to, learning.”

Contrast that with the philosophy of the supposedly brilliant Malcolm — “TV doesn’t make you stupid; TV makes you normal” — and you get a better idea of what we’re up against.

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR

## Conferences

### **Confratute 2000**

*23rd Summer Institute on TAG*

**July 10 - 21, 2000**

Storrs, CT

*For further information contact:*

*Sally Reis at (860) 486-4826*

*www.goifted.uconn.edu*

### **Edufest 2000**

**July 23 - 28, 2000**

Boise, ID

*For further information contact:*

*(208) 378-0578*

*e-mail <http://education.boisestate.edu/edufest>*

### **Summer Institute 2000**

Oregon Department of Education

**July 24 - 28, 2000**

Newport, OR

*For further information contact:*

*Jo Anne Robison (503) 378-3598*

*or e-mail: [joanne.robison@state.or.us](mailto:joanne.robison@state.or.us)*

### **"Renaissance 2000: Gifted Education for the Future"**

Nevada Association for the Gifted and Talented

**October 13, - 15, 2000**

Las Vegas, NV

*For further information contact:*

*(702) 263-5893*

### **WAETAG 2000 Conference**

*(Washington Association for the  
Education of Talented and Gifted)*

*"Harvest the Gifts:*

*Getting to the Core of Differentiation"*

**October 19 - 20, 2000**

Wenatchee, WA

*For further information contact:*

*terribawden@hotmail.com*

### **47th Annual NAGC Convention**

*"Crossroads to the Future"*

**November 1 - 5, 2000**

Atlanta, GA

*For further information contact:*

*(202) 785-4268*

### **"Gifted Education: Passport to the 21st Century"**

Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented

**November 29 - December 2, 2000**

Austin, TX

*For further information contact:*

*www.txgifted.org*

### **14th World Conference of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children**

**July 31 - August 4, 2001**

Barcelona, Spain

*For further information contact:*

*Centro Huerta Del Rey: [chrey@correo.cop.es](mailto:chrey@correo.cop.es)*

### **"A Journey of Giftedness: The Whole Child"**

California Association for the Gifted

**March 2 - 4, 2001**

Sacramento, CA

*For further information contact:*

*CAG Office*

*5777 W. Century Blvd., Ste. 1670*

*Los Angeles, CA 90045*

## Seminars

### **Javits 2000 Summer Program**

**June 8 - 30, 2000**

Tulsa, OK

*For further information contact:*

*Dr. Pat Hollingsworth*

*University School*

*600 S. College*

*Tulsa, OK 74104*

### **"Teaching Gifted Kids and Kids with Learning Difficulties in the Regular Classroom"**

**June 20 - 21, 2000**

Portland, OR

*For further information contact:*

*(888) 327-3477, ext. 2*

### **Kay Law Seminar Dealing with Middle School Students**

**June 27, 2000**

Bend, OR

*For further information contact:*

*Lynn Lynch*

*Instructional Services*

*520 NW Wall Street*

*Bend, OR 97701*

*e-mail: llynch@bend.k12.or.us*

### **TAG 2000**

Summer Seminar for Educators and Parents

**June 30, 2000**

Eugene, OR

*For further information contact:*

*(541) 346-1404*

## Upcoming Events For Kids

### **Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI)**

Portland, OR

Science Camps and Classes

(Ages 6 to Adult)

*For further information contact:*

*(503) 797-4545*

### **Science Adventures for Kids**

Science Classes for Able Learners

(Grades KG - 6th)

*For further information contact:*

*Jaimie Vaudrey*

*(503) 579-0269*

### **Pacific NW College of Art**

Classes in Drawing, Painting and Sculpture

*For further information contact:*

*(503) 226-0462*

### **Forestry Summer Camp**

World Forestry Center

Portland, OR

*For further information contact:*

*(503) 228-1367*

### **Zoo Camp**

Portland, OR

Weekly sessions beginning the week of

**June 19 - Aug. 20, 2000**

(Ages 4 - 13)

*For further information contact:*

*(503) 220-2781*

### **Saturday Academy**

“Classes for Students of High Potential”

*For further information contact:*

Portland Campus: (503) 690-1190

South Coast Campus: (541) 267-3635

Corvallis Campus: (541) 737-1822

Lane County Campus: (541) 346-1402

Southern Oregon Campus: (541) 552-6326

### **Young Musicians and Artists**

Willamette University

Salem, OR

*For further information contact:*

*(503) 281-9528*

### **Oregon Governor's School for Citizen Leadership**

Willamette University

Salem, OR

*For further information contact:*

*(503) 222-5559*

### **Writer to Writer**

(Nonresidential Program)

### **Fir Acres Workshop in**

### **Writing and Thinking**

(Residential Program)

Lewis and Clark College

Portland, OR

**(Both Programs for High School Students)**

*For further information contact:*

*(503) 768-7617*

### **Adventures in Learning**

Corvallis, OR

**July 17 - 28, 2000**

*(Grades 5 - 7)*

***Application Deadline - March 15, 2000***

*For further information contact:*

*Judy Michael at (541) 737-1289*

*or e-mail: michaelj@orst.edu*

### **Expeditions**

Corvallis, OR

**July 17 - 28, 2000**

*(Grades 3 - 4)*

*For further information contact:*

*Judy Michael (541)- 737-1289*

### **Super Summer**

Eugene, OR

*(Grades K - 5)*

**June 26 - July 20, 2000**

*For further information contact:*

*afisher@darkwing.uoregon.edu*

### **Summer Enrichment Program**

Eugene, OR

*(Grades 6 -9)*

**Session 1: June 25 - July 8, 2000**

**Session II: July 9 - July 22, 2000**

*For further information contact:*

*sumenr@oregon.uoregon.edu*

*(541) 346-3084*

### **Summer Writers' Camp**

Eugene, OR

*(Grades 4 -8)*

**Dates TBA**

**Sessions: in July for Grades 3 - 5**

**in August for Grades 6 - 7**

*For further information contact:*

*ywalouisa@aol.com*

### **Academy 2000**

Ashland, OR

**Session A**

**Gr. 5 - 6 - June 18 - 24, 2000**

*(Sessions B & C are Concurrent)*

**Gr. 5 - 6 & Gr. 7 - 8- June 25 - July 1, 2000**

*For further information contact:*

*(541) 552-6916*

# What We Have Learned About Gifted Children

1979-1997

*Linda Kreger Silverman, Ph.D., Director*

*By concentrating totally on the gifted population, the Gifted Development Center has acquired a considerable amount of knowledge about the development of giftedness. Here are some of the highlights of what we have learned in 19 years from 3,000 children:*

- There are many more highly gifted children in the population than anyone realizes. We have found over 300 children above 160 IQ, the largest sample in this IQ range ever studied. (If your child is in this IQ range, and you are interested in participating in our study, please send us a copy of your child's report.)
- As many girls as boys (ages 3 - 12) test above 180 IQ; however, 98% of eminent individuals are male. This inequity has been blamed for thousands of years on the lack of innate intelligence in females. The test which proves that there are equal numbers of males and females in the highest IQ ranges is no longer in use in school districts; and IQ testing itself has come under serious attack. If the trend continues, there will be no way to prove that girls are as smart as boys because girls are socialized into hiding their abilities and valuing their appearance and social skills more than their intelligence and achievement.
- Where one child in the family is found to be gifted, the chances are great that all members of the family are gifted. Brothers and sisters are usually within 5 or 10 points in ability. We studied 148 sets of siblings and found that over 1/3 were within 5 points of each other, over 3/5 were within 10 points, and almost 3/4 were within 13 points.
- Second children are recognized as gifted much less frequently than first-borns or only children. Even the first-born identical twin has a greater chance of being accepted in a gifted program than the second-born!
- Parents' IQ scores, when known, are usually within 10 points of their children's; grandparents' IQ scores are often within 10 points of their grandchildren's.
- Gifted children's IQ scores become depressed at approximately 9 years due to ceiling effects of the test. The ideal age for testing is between 4 and 8.
- Parents are excellent identifiers of giftedness in their children: 84% of the children who fit 3/4 of the characteristics in our intake procedure, according to parental judgment, test at least in the superior range. Over 95% show giftedness in at least one area, but are asynchronous in their development, and their weaknesses depress their IQ scores.
- Giftedness can be observed in the first three years by rapid progression through the developmental milestones.
- IQ test norms are biased against gifted children. The same raw score yields an IQ score for average children approximately 8 points lower in 1991 than in 1960, whereas for gifted children the difference is 31 points—a loss of one IQ point per year. Because of their low ceilings, none of the current tests provides valid IQ scores for highly gifted children.

(Silverman/continued from page 13)

- Many cases of underachievement are linked to chronic early ear infections (9 or more in the first three years), with residual effects of auditory sequential processing deficits. Spelling, arithmetic, handwriting, rote memorization, attention, and motivation to do written work are all typically affected.
- Highly gifted children, creative children, mathematically talented children, children with attention deficits, learning disabled children, culturally diverse children, and underachievers often are visual-spatial learners who require different teaching methods. We have developed methods of diagnosing this learning pattern and effective strategies for teaching visual-spatial learners.
- Gifted children with hidden learning disabilities (dual exceptionalities) are much more prevalent in the population than anyone realizes; one-sixth of the gifted children who come to us for testing have some type of learning disability—usually undetected before the assessment.
- Children with dual exceptionalities usually have at least one parent with the same learning pattern. Visual-spatial learners and children with dual exceptionalities tend to get smarter as they get older and often become successful adults in fields such as technology, architecture, engineering, aeronautics, mathematics, science, fine arts and business leadership.
- Over 60% of gifted children are introverted compared with 30% of the general population. Over 75% of highly gifted children are introverted. Introversions correlates with introspection, reflection, the ability to inhibit aggression, deep sensitivity, moral development, high academic achievement, scholarly contributions, leadership in academic and aesthetic fields in adult life, and smoother passage through midlife; however, it is very likely to be misunderstood and “corrected” in children.
- Perfectionism, sensitivity and intensity are three personality traits associated with giftedness. They are derived from the complexity of the child’s cognitive and emotional development. According to Dabrowski’s theory, these traits are indicative of potential for high moral values in adult life. The brighter the child, the earlier and more profound is his or her concern with moral issues.
- Gifted girls and gifted boys have different coping mechanisms and are likely to face different problems. Gifted girls hide their abilities and learn to blend in with other children. In elementary school they direct their mental energies into developing social relationships; in junior high school they are valued for their appearance and sociability rather than for their intelligence. Gifted boys are often considered “immature” and may be held back in school if they cannot socialize with children their own age with whom they have no common interests.
- Mildly, moderately, highly and extraordinarily gifted children are as different from each other as mildly, moderately, severely and profoundly retarded children are from each other, but the differences among levels of giftedness are rarely recognized.
- Gifted children have better social adjustment in classes with children like themselves; the brighter the child, the lower the child’s social self-concept in regular classrooms. Social self-concept immediately improves when children are placed with true peers in special classes.

(Schuler/continued from page 17)

- There are more poor gifted children than there are rich gifted children. Therefore, when attempts are made to eliminate programs for the gifted on the basis that they are “elitist,” it is the poor who suffer the most.

*Linda Kregrer Silverman, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and director of the Gifted Development Center in Denver, Colorado. She is a noted author, editor, researcher, and international lecturer on all aspects of giftedness. You can find her web site at <http://www.gifteddevelopment.com>. Click on "resources" and you will find many articles on a large variety of topics related to giftedness.*

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**POSTSCRIPT:** (Holston let readers know a few days later what reactions he received about the above article.)

...Many people responded to a column dealing with educators who despair about TV's frequent negative portrayal of teachers, conscientious students and school in general.

A self-identified mother of three, annoyed by yours truly's use of Fox's "Malcolm in the Middle" as an example of how gifted kids are stereotyped and disparaged, suggested that I "get a life." A hostile high school student e-mailed this contention: that kids don't get the idea that school is boring from TV, they get it from school. But much more typical were the adults, not all of them teachers, who said they share a concern that the entertainment industry makes it harder for teachers to teach by making academic success look geeky and uncool. One teacher said that many of his students "think" "Jerry Springer" is really a show about conflict resolution.

**Noel Holston is the Star Tribune radio and television critic. This article first appeared in the *Star Tribune*, Minneapolis-St. Paul, February 15 and May 4, 2000 issues, and is reprinted with permission from the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented *MCGT News*, April/June, 2000 issue.**

For information on what's new in gifted education, visit a website that will allow you to access information about the Oregon Association for Talented and Gifted and what's happening in the state and nationally. Find us at:

**[www.oatag.org](http://www.oatag.org)**

To get updates on gifted education through links with education and government sites, access to our kids' site, contact OATAG board members, or volunteer in an exciting and challenging organization, drop in via the internet. Check us out and find out what's new in the world of gifted education!

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