

# ECHA NEWS

EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR HIGH ABILITY

SPRING 2019

https://echathematic2019.info

Keresés



ABOUT US ABOUT CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AUTHOR GUIDELINES PUBLICATIONS



## President's Message

Dear ECHA Members,

We are in between two ECHA Conferences. Our 16th conference in Dublin was a success having participants from 50 countries. The upcoming **1st Thematic ECHA Conference is centred on creativity**, which will be held in Dubrovnik, Croatia between 16 and 18 October 2019. The conference will be organized by the Faculty of Education of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek in Croatia, and will feature 3 excellent keynote speakers, a Youth Summit, plenty of discussion time in parallel and poster sessions and a lucrative social programme. The abstract submission is open until April 30th. Please register yourself to this exciting conference at the website: [https://](https://echathematic2019.info/)

[echathematic2019.info/](https://echathematic2019.info/). More info can be received from Zeljko Racki at [zracki@fozoos.hr](mailto:zracki@fozoos.hr). The next **International ECHA Conference will be in Porto, Portugal between 9 and 12 September 2020**. The conference organization is on track: we had a successful organization meeting last October. The 2nd Thematic ECHA Conference will be in Budapest, between 25-27 March 2021. The **conference will feature the key topic of "Closing the achievement gaps in gifted education" and will take place between 25 and 27 March 2021**. Please mark the event in your calendar!

**The qualification of ECHA trainings is proceeding now by the ECHA Education Board** (Christian Fischer, chair, Lianne Hoogeveen, Ulrike Kempter, Victor Müller-Oppliger and Szilvia Péter Szarka, members). **Please have a look at the guidelines and application procedure for the ECHA qualification of university-**

**based training programmes** leading to a certificate of advanced studies, diploma of advanced studies or a master degree in gifted education here: <http://echa.info/echa-training>. Since ECHA's name and logo are trademarks, **after September 2019 no ECHA-trainings can be started without previous qualification by the ECHA Education Board**. The ECHA-training programme also drew interest already from many European countries, where ECHA-trainings have not been established yet. Soon we will have a separate sub-account for the ECHA Education Board in our bank, where the qualification fees can be transferred. Please address all your inquiries to the ECHA Education Board at [training@echa.info](mailto:training@echa.info).

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[www.echa.info](http://www.echa.info)

**The Qualification Committee of the European Talent Support Network had selected its 25th Talent Centre, which is in Saudi Arabia.** The Network is about to establish its own organization as a European NGO and runs several joint programmes, such as an Erasmus+ project developing an e-platform on teacher training in gifted education. You can see the 300+ participating organizations of the Network here: <http://etsn.eu/map-of-etsn>. **The applications to join as Talent Points became continuous.** Call and application form can be reached and filled out at the Network's website: <http://etsn.eu>. In case of any further inquiries, please send an email to the Coordinator of the Network, Csilla Fuszek at [fuszekcs@gmail.com](mailto:fuszekcs@gmail.com).

From January, Colm O'Reilly, our secretary also became the treasurer of ECHA re-establishing a long-term tradition when the two posts were served by the same person. **We thank Tessa Kieboom a lot for her decade-long service as the treasurer of ECHA!** ECHA established a new bank account in Dublin and converted its website to an https secure site to assure an even larger security of data handled. ECHA's webmaster, Michelle Keevans from Colm's team has installed a "one-click" membership renewal service which is accessible after a login with the general ECHA username and password to this site <https://echa.info/re-registration>. At the site ECHA members may review their stored data and finalize their re-registration. With the great help of our new ECHA General Committee member, Mariska Poelman, ECHA is currently updating its registration data.

As a growing sign of networking activity the number of ECHA's Facebook group members <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ECHAGroup/> increased from 2200 to more than 3000 during the four months passed since the previous ECHA News.

I am wishing all ECHA members a great continuation of our more than 30 years tradition of high quality research and even broader talent-related cooperation across Europe!

**Peter Csermely**, President of ECHA  
Contact: [csermelynet@gmail.com](mailto:csermelynet@gmail.com)

## Financial Report

01 January 2018 – 31 December 2018

TESSA KIEBOOM, TREASURER, BELGIUM

Contact: [tessa.kieboom@cbo-antwerpen.be](mailto:tessa.kieboom@cbo-antwerpen.be)

OPENING BALANCE 01.01.2018 **65.001,56 €**

IN		OUT	
full membership (*)	12.607,76 €	Ingenico	1.092,35 €
student membership (*)	58,56 €	Transaction charges	18,15 €
corporate membership (*)	1.807,52 €	bank costs + charges PC banking	40,78 €
Paypal members	1.000,00 €	Dicks' ECHA News	2.356,20 €
Conference fee Dublin	3.000,00 €	Annette Heinbokel ECHA News	2.485,00 €
		Website ECHA Tuzes	1.000,00 €
		Worldline fee	22,73 €
		E-voting website development	500 €
		Expenses Budapest-Dublin	406,22 €
		HAS T&F	27.730,96 €
		Fidusud	59,20 €
		Chamber of Commerce	15,00 €
<b>Total IN</b>	<b>18.473,84 €</b>	<b>Total OUT</b>	<b>35.726,59 €</b>

(\*) as a result of credit card payments membership fees are no longer rounded figures because of costs charged

CLOSING BALANCE 31.12.2018 **47.748,81 €**

Note1: please add to the closing balance our balance at Paypal on 31 Dec 2018, which was 1.308.93 EUR

Note2: High Ability Studies (HAS) charges covered the last 3 years

Note3: "Budapest-Dublin expenses" covered a trip necessary to open ECHA's new bank account

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## Editorial

**ANNETTE HEINBOKEL, GERMANY**

This issue of ECHA News is all about differences, differences between different ways of supporting gifted children, differences between gifted and profoundly gifted children, differences between countries. Among others we are made aware of that through the reports by the National Correspondents. We know that Greece has had and still has financial problems. This means that the parents and their gifted children face more obstacles than families in other countries. In Estonia on the other hand the theme is to bring technological innovation to schools faster.

The words ‚gifted / giftedness‘ and their equivalence in different languages evoke different emotions in the respective countries. In England there have been discussions for some time which would be the words best used to describe children who learn faster, more easily, earlier and go deeper into subjects than average children and who need different educational provisions. The ‚National Association for Able Children in Education‘ (NACE) uses the expressions ‚more able‘ and ‚exceptionally able‘. According to Hilary Lowe, England, the terminology ‚gifted and talented‘ is outdated. The former English ‚National Association for Gifted Children‘ (NAGC), has therefore changed its name to ‚Potential Plus‘, because it better describes the children they care for.

In Germany within the ‚German Association for Gifted Children‘ there have been discussions for years which now and again boil up again to find ‚better‘ words for ‚hochbegabt / Hochbegabung‘. To many people who know not much about the phenomenon the German words evoke ideas of elitism, arrogance, wanting to be better, to give their children better chances than the rest of the population has. Parents of gifted children do not feel at all that that fits their attitude towards life and their outlook for the future of their children. So far trying to find new expressions has not been successful, and the discussions have died down for the time being. Personally I think it's better to call a spade a spade. That means for the popular media to avoid words

such as ‚elite‘, ‚genius‘ and ‚miracle children‘ when writing about gifted children and in the long run to fill the words with the right content that is generally accepted.

Other examples for differences are the reports about projects for gifted children from Austria and Hamburg.

The Austrian report starts with the African proverb „It takes a whole village to raise a child.“ The development programme BeRG is situated in a rural area. By involving almost everybody in the project, schools as well as youth centres, music schools ... and businesses they have turned the area into a „gifted region“. That way it becomes a matter of course to support and develop the gifts of all children. Giftedness is not something so special to raise eyebrows.

Hamburg on the other hand, with close to 2 million inhabitants the second biggest city in Germany, organizes things differently. The ‚Counselling Centre for Special Aptitudes‘ (BbB) created a framework for schools to assess what they are already doing and how they can go on improving the situation, as well as supporting and counselling individual teachers and parents. The framework allows for many different forms of support for gifted children, from the different forms of enrichment to different kinds of acceleration.

Susan Jackson's article deals with profoundly gifted children. People in Europe are still getting used to the idea that there are gifted children with needs that differ from those of average children. The profoundly gifted differ as much from gifted children as the gifted do from average children. To help them to acquire the knowledge they crave for without some form of acceleration, including radical acceleration, is impossible. Leaving them with their age mates, no form of enrichment can suffice. As gifted children are rare, profoundly gifted children are even more rare. There are families that have gifted as well as profoundly gifted children, and they are very much aware of the differences. With tests in the German language it is not possible to correctly identify these children because they do not go much higher than IQs of up to 145. It's like trying to weigh a person of 200 kilos

with scales that go only up to 150 kilos. English language tests can measure IQs of up to 200 points.

A well known profoundly gifted person was William James Sidis (1898-1944). He was not yet a year old when he started spelling with bricks: ‚physiological psychology‘, a book he had found on the bottom shelf in his father's library. He was able to read when he was 18 months old, and he began studying at Harvard aged 11, together with Norbert Wiener and Roger Sessions. As an adult he spoke 40 languages. The media were extremely interested in him, so much so that as an adult he did all he could to be invisible in public life.

As profoundly gifted children are so rare, teachers are most unlikely to come across one of them during their teaching career. Chances are just as likely as winning the jackpot in a lottery. However, a person buying lottery tickets should not be totally surprised if she / he did win, that's not a miracle, it's a simple statistical (un)likelihood. Teachers who are really interested in gifted children should keep an open mind to the fact she / he MIGHT come across a profoundly gifted child.

**Annette Heinbokel, editor**

Contact: [annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de](mailto:annette.heinbokel@swbmail.de)

## Above and Beyond Awards Ceremony

The 2019 Above and Beyond Awards Ceremony took place on February 11th at the International Conference Centre, Birmingham.

The Above and Beyond Awards celebrate parents, teachers, support staff and other professionals in the UK who go 'above and beyond' to help exceptional young people within the UK achieve their high learning potential. They also celebrate the achievements of children and young

people in the UK, 'above and beyond' expectation for their age, who help in the wider community or are overcoming challenges in order to excel.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is given to an individual who has had a positive

and ongoing impact on the provision of education and support of children and young people with high learning potential or dual or multiple exceptionalities.

The winner is Professor Diane Montgomery



Bobby Seagull – Professor Diane Montgomery – Johnny Ball

**Professor Diane Montgomery** is a qualified teacher, a chartered psychologist and professor emerita at Middlesex University where she researches and lectures internationally on underachievement, giftedness, and dual or multiple exceptionalities. She has written more than 30 books, 20 study guides and over 100 articles and chapters with major contributions to the field of high learning potential.

She provides a wealth of knowledge, understanding and experience for those working to support children and young adults with high learning potential, and for those who also have a special educational need (DME). She continues to present and share her experience at international conferences, most recently at ECHA 2018 (European Council for High Ability) in Dublin.

<https://www.potentialplusuk.org/index.php/above-and-beyond-awards/lifetime-achievement-award/>

[www.echa.info](http://www.echa.info)

# Strengthening Talents through a Regional Development Programme

“It takes a whole village to raise a child.”

(African proverb)

**SILKE ROGL, AUSTRIA**

An inspiring environment supports and fosters strengths and talents. A gifted environment offers diverse, colourful learning opportunities as well as informal, non-formal and formal educational settings with supportive advisors and mentors.

BeRG is a regional development programme with the focus on "empowering". BeRG (German acronym for "Begabung entwickelt Region und Gemeinde") stands for "giftedness develops region and community". It provides positive impulses for a gifted environment where children enjoy growing up and realizing their talents.

The concept for the BeRG programme was created by the Austrian Research and Support Centre for the Gifted and Talented (ÖZBF) and was implemented in a rural Austrian region as an EU Leader project in cooperation with the school board and an association for regional development (LEADER Verein Nationalpark Hohe Tauern).

## BeRG initiatives

The following activities were carried out in the regional development programme BeRG, always with the overall aim of sustainable implementation so that the existing educational landscape would over time transform into a „gifted region“:

- Treasure Map and Website: An interactive map lists all activities, events and courses as well as local experts in specific talent domains.
- Competence Network: An "Education & Counseling" training programme qualifies interested persons. They build up a competence network for talented children and youth.
- Professionalization: Further education for teachers and parents provides ideas on designing gifted learning settings in school, kindergarten and at home.
- Enrichment: The enrichment programmes 'Forschungs- und

Schaffensraum', 'BeRG4U' or 'TauchEIN' offer children and young people opportunities to deepen their interests in the fields of science, media, art, literature and music.

- JungeUNI: University lecturers let youngsters experience science first-hand and show them how exciting research, scientific thinking and excellent work can be.
- Business forms school: For one day each month, regional entrepreneurs from the fields of metal construction, bakery, timber construction, installation technology or electrical engineering collaborate with school teachers in their regular subjects and team up for one day of joint teaching.
- Strengths box: This box contains tricky and entertaining tasks that let students discover and learn about their strengths in the areas of body awareness, spatial imagination, nature & environment, language, logic & maths, music and social interaction.

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Enrichment: „Magicians at work“

**The Concept of BeRG**

The BeRG programme concept has three focal points: resource orientation, systemic view and regional development.

(1) A resource-oriented attitude and a positive view of the strengths of all children are essential in order for them to develop optimally, enjoy learning as well as build self-esteem and resilience.

(2) Talent development takes place in complex learning systems. Above-average performance is triggered by the interaction of many components: courses, competitions, expertise, teachers, mentors etc. In addition, effort and goal orientation are necessary for effective talent development.

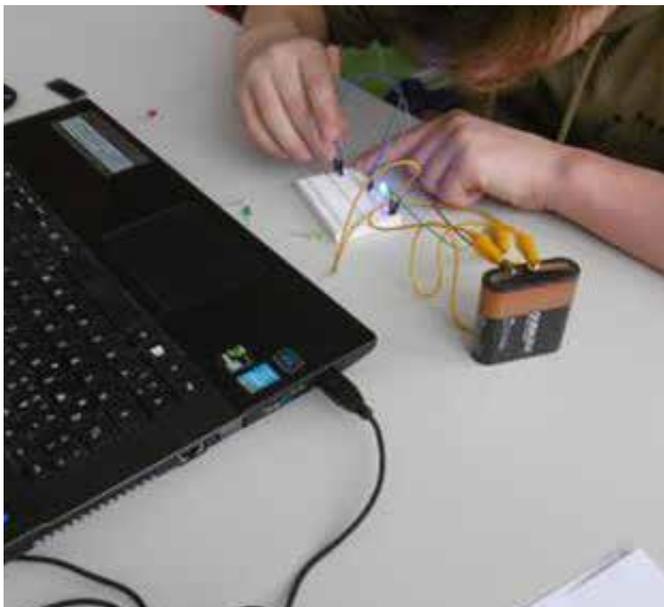
(3) The entire region will become more attractive for young and older people. Creating a support structure for the development of one's potential is the

best possible contributor to a high quality of life.

“At every stage in the talent-development process, opportunities need to be provided by the community (broadly defined to include school, neighbourhood, local and regional community, society at large), and opportunities need to be taken advantage of and committed to by the talented individual.” (Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius & Worrell, 2011, p. 7)

**BeRG at a glance October 2015 – October 2018**

	<b>in general</b>	<b>in detail</b>
<b>aims</b>	appreciation for talented and gifted children	professionalization, counseling network
	building up talent-promoting structure and conditions	workshops for children and adolescents, JungeUNI, strengths box etc.
		optimize transitions: networking between educational institutions
<b>target groups</b>	families, children and adolescents at formal, informal and non-formal educational venues, educators	kindergartens and schools
		youth centre, music school, libraries, museums, national park centre
	22.000 inhabitants	economy: construction, manufacturing, agriculture, hotels and restaurants, transport, public administration and education
<b>conception and implementation</b>	ÖZBF, steering groups	BeRG programme team at the ÖZBF external programme group BeRG coordinator planning groups regional association



Enrichment: programming with Arduino

For further information (in German) see our project report with evaluation details, factors of success and outcomes.

[www.oezbf.at/berg](http://www.oezbf.at/berg)  
[www.berg-oberpinzgau.at](http://www.berg-oberpinzgau.at)

**Silke Rogl, Mag.**, is BeRG programme manager, deputy director of the Austrian Research and Support Centre for the Gifted and Talented (ÖZBF)

Contact: [silke.rogl@oezbf.at](mailto:silke.rogl@oezbf.at)

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**Subotnik, Rena F., Olszewski-Kubilius, Paula, & Worrell, Frank C.** (2011). Rethinking giftedness and gifted education: A proposed direction forward based on psychological science. *Psychological science in the public interest*, 12(1), 3-54.

# Supporting the Gifted & Developing Schools: a Framework for the Systemic Development of Talent Programmes

**JAN KWIETNIEWSKI, ANNE ZIESENITZ  
& DAGMAR WEGNER, GERMANY**

*Imagine a grammar school in Hamburg, Germany. At a day-long teachers' conference concerning how to support gifted students, the teachers learn more about how to identify gifted and talented students, what is special about them and how a school could go about offering them a varied talent programme.*

*Small groups of teachers discuss heatedly whether the school offers enough for these students or if maybe no more effort is required – this being a grammar school, after all.*

*In a final discussion at the end of the day, a lot of ideas are collected (e.g. an afternoon course in creative writing or fixed office hours for counselling the gifted) and there are some open questions as well. The meeting ends with the professed intention that the lion's share of teachers want to offer more to the gifted and talented. A small but influential group of teachers is still sceptical. They doubt that there are really gifted students in their classes.*

*A week later, the head teacher sets up a meeting with the team that prepared the conference. They sift through the results of the day and try to determine what is important, what is not quite so relevant, what can be realistically implemented, what can be done to get the critics on board, and how they can go about this.*

## **What we do – "Beratungsstelle besondere Begabungen (BbB)" (Counselling Centre for Special Aptitudes)**

In such processes as described in the scenario above it is helpful to have professional support beyond the school system for counselling and questions how to implement gifted education. The "Beratungsstelle besondere Begabungen (BbB)" has supported schools in implementing talent programmes for 21 years. The BbB is the central counselling centre for the gifted in Hamburg, Germany, and belongs to the school board. Our responsibilities are diverse: counselling schools, running projects of school development, providing seminars for the teaching staff as well as intense qualification courses of multipliers, and organising enrichment programmes. Moreover, we counsel parents, students and teachers in individual cases and conduct intelligence diagnostics. Our goal is to increase awareness of the special needs of gifted and talented students, whether they be high achievers or just unchallenged. We want to show different options of how to make school more interesting for the gifted, including integrative and additive measures as well as acceleration. Ideally, teachers feel strengthened in their willingness to go the extra mile for the gifted.

## **How the framework came into play**

At the BbB, we realized that schools need a framework to realistically assess how they are doing and what to do next over which period of time. In particular head teachers and the development teams were eager to obtain a framework for controlling and management aspects. Most books on the topic of talent programmes (cf. BMBF 2015) outline a basic understanding of how to define giftedness, how to identify them in class and what to offer them (usually divided into enrichment and acceleration programmes). They provide useful information but lack a systematic framework or guidelines how to implement talent programmes. This is what we developed the "Five Fields of Action in Educational Talent Programmes" for, which later became the basis of the overall Framework for Systemic Development of Talent Programmes.

The framework was developed in connection with several projects of school development that were realized in Hamburg between 2004 and 2015. It turned out that the schools varied greatly in their individual profiles concerning the gifted. Some schools offered many additional courses, but were not sure if they did enough in an ordinary classroom setting. Others were quite flexible in coming up with individual solutions for some students, but wondered if they could improve the structural component of their gifted programme. The schools tackled a whole range of issues: teaching materials, methods and task formation as well as pull-out programmes for the highly gifted or enrichment courses with external experts. They also addressed the question of how to choose the right students for the right programme (nomination).

Hence, we wanted to develop a framework that structures the broad variety of issues and provides support both on a very practical level and on the level of the administrators creating the structural outline of the talent programme. It should be instrumental in quality control and school development planning for school authorities, head teachers, administrators, control group and special needs coordinators. The framework was aimed at supporting schools in implementing talent programmes that catered to the specific situation at a specific school. As a consequence, we decided to draw on all aspects of our practical experience in this sector. In addition to that we did research focussing on evaluations of comparable frameworks (cf. Friedl 2010; NAGC 2010; ÖZBF 2006 and 2011 and Weilguny & Friedl 2012) and combined the different aspects. In 2017, we published the Framework for Systemic Development of Talent Programmes based on the "Five Fields of Action in Educational Talent Programmes" and provided all schools in Hamburg with a copy or an online version.

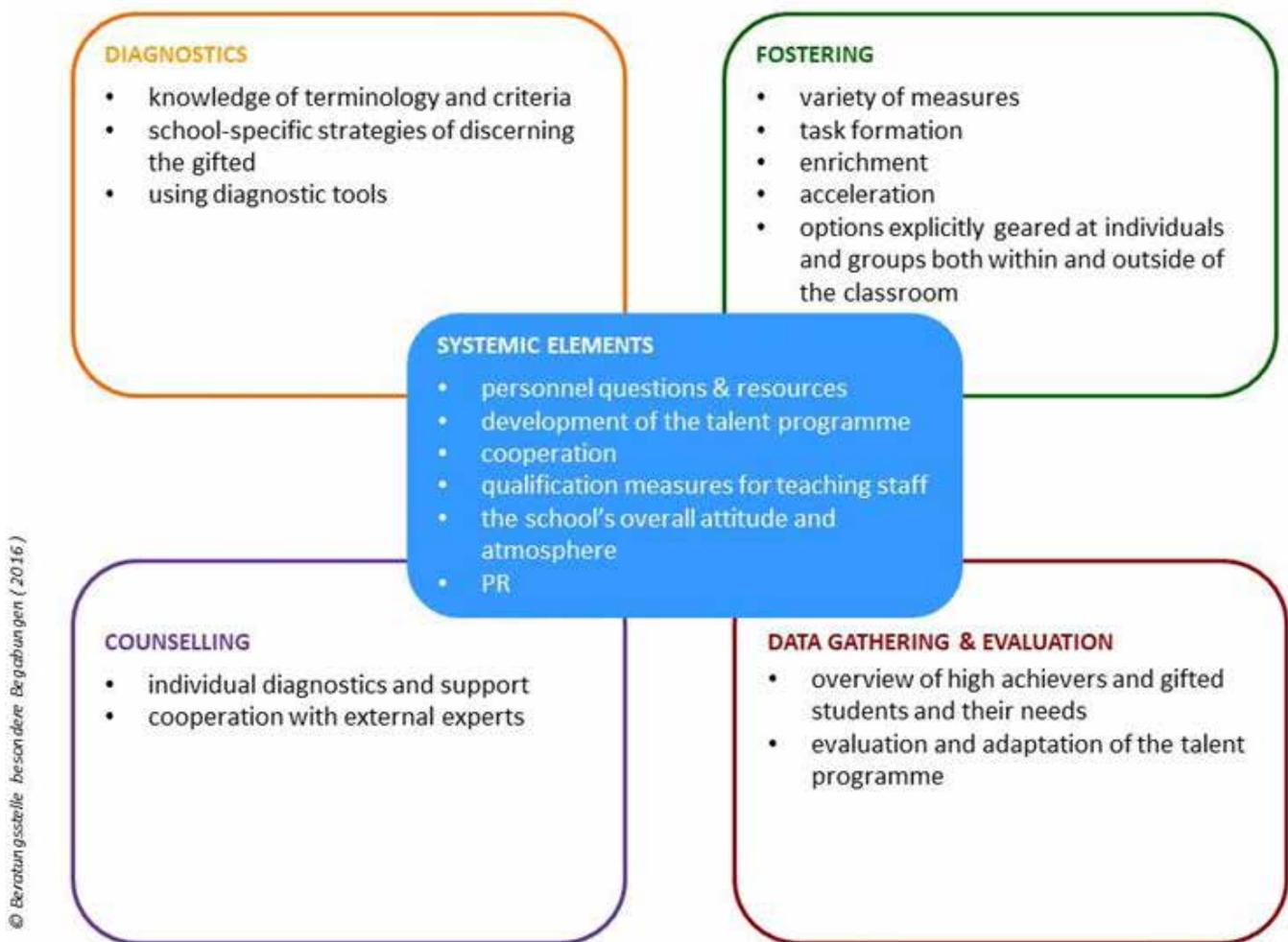
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**How the Framework for the Systemic Development of Talent Programmes works**

The framework refers to a broad understanding of the concept of giftedness (cf. KMK, 2015) that is also at the centre of the nationwide campaign LemaS (“Leistung macht Schule”<sup>1</sup>, 2016). This concept of giftedness aims at talent programmes that have

integrative elements as well as additive elements, i.e. within and outside of the classroom, and that deal with the individual needs of highly gifted students adequately by ensuring access to diagnostics, counselling and individualized programmes like acceleration. The framework consists of five fields of action which are all interrelated (cf. figure 1).

Figure 1: Five Fields of Action in Educational Talent Programmes



You can start looking at talent programmes from each of these angles, really (therefore you would not find numbers). In each of the fields of action, the appropriate measures are divided into necessary elements (minimal standards) and voluntary additions (expansion options). Moreover, the sections contain a page for self assessment of where the school is at (see example below).

**Example 1: How it works**

Field of action “systemic elements”: structural elements that pave the way for the implementation and management of the talent programme (cf. example figure 2).

<sup>1</sup> Can be very loosely translated as “Achievements catch on”.

**Example 2: Data gathering and evaluation**

Field of action “systemic elements”: structural elements that pave the way for the implementation and management of the talent programme (cf. example figure 2).

Figure 2:

TARGET: overview of the target group

measure	realization	
<b>minimal standards</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
The school gathers the data of all its enrichment programme participants and creates an overview on an annual basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The FBF<sup>1</sup> keeps a statistic record (i.e. age group, topic, number of participants, grades, sex) of all participants who take part in individual or group programmes of the school's talent programme.</li> <li>The FBF makes sure that all records are kept according to the data protection regulations</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>expansion options</b>		
Individual personalized records of the taken measures are being kept for exceptional cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A standardized documentation sheet is used, which lists all support measures for students of the following groups (e.g. LEBL):</li> <li>all groups listed above</li> <li>all students fitting the category of being twice exceptional meaning: highly able students with a coexisting disability or disorder, highly able students with special education needs, highly able students with learning difficulties, highly able underachievers.</li> <li>students who received awards for achievements outside of school (e.g. winning a contest)</li> <li>The staff has agreed upon general standards when and how to use the documentation sheet mentioned above.</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> The coordinator and administrator of the school's talent programme: Fachkraft für Begabtenförderung (FBF)

## Conclusion

The Framework for the Systemic Development of Talent Programmes offers the possibility of taking stock at your own school and providing a starting point for a discussion amongst the teachers. It can be used both for an internal evaluation of your status quo and for a systematic improvement of your school's talent programme, including short-term and long-term goals and lots of ideas for a broad range of measures for gifted students.

We have also come to realize that the framework structures our daily work: during school counselling it functions as a framework for an evaluation of the status quo and it structures the topics of our seminars and qualifications. We have developed qualifications for both primary and secondary school teachers that are centred on the five fields of action and turn these teachers into multipliers who establish talent programmes at their schools. Moreover, we offer special seminars for head teachers and administrators that focus on the field of action "systemic elements" and the overall aspect of quality control.

So far, we have got overwhelmingly positive feedback: schools find the Framework for the Systemic Development of Talent Programmes extremely helpful. Currently, we are planning to evaluate the use of the Framework more systematically at the end of this school year.

You will find the publication in German here:

<https://li.hamburg.de/materialien-lehrkraefte/8163496/handreichung-schulisches-konzept-begabtenfoerderung/>

For more information about BbB (in German only):

<https://li.hamburg.de/bbb/>

**Jan Kwietniewski** is a school-psychologist and the head of BbB. His main areas of expertise include intelligence diagnostics and school counselling on concept development. He is a consultant in the city of Hamburg for gifted education.

Contact: [Jan.Kwietniewski@bsb.hamburg.de](mailto:Jan.Kwietniewski@bsb.hamburg.de)

**Anne Ziesenitz, PhD**, is a psychologist at the BbB with a focus on counselling individuals as well as schools.

Contact: [Anne.Ziesenitz@bsb.hamburg.de](mailto:Anne.Ziesenitz@bsb.hamburg.de)

**Dagmar Wegner, PhD**, is a teacher at a secondary school in Hamburg. She also works part time at the BbB, mostly giving seminars for teachers and coordinating the qualification programmes.

Contact: [Dagmar.wegner@bsb.hamburg.de](mailto:Dagmar.wegner@bsb.hamburg.de)

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## PAM-IE Belgrade 2019 Conference Announcement

Dear colleagues,

I am glad to announce the first international conference, **Psychology and Music – Interdisciplinary Encounters**, which will be held from **24 – 26th October 2019** at the University of Arts in Belgrade, Serbia.

This conference is organized to promote interdisciplinary research of the psychology of music and enhance communication within communities of researchers, musicians and music practitioners. Psychologists and musicians, working on the psychological aspects of musical giftedness, performance, perception, cognition and the experience of music, are warmly invited. The conference is supported by the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (ESCOM)<sup>1</sup>. Keynote speakers are the distinguished scholars in the field of the psychology of music and music education as well, and they will talk about contemporary music audiences, communication in ensembles, music

memory and prenatal musical development: **John Sloboda**, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London; **Renee Timmers**, Department of Music, University of Sheffield; **Jane Ginsborg**, Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester and **Richard Parncutt**, Centre for Systematic Musicology, University of Graz.

You may find more about the conference, themes and options of participation at the conference web site

<https://psychologyandmusicconference2019.wordpress.com/>

**Prof. Dr. Blanka Bogunović**

Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade

President of the Programme Committee

Contact: [bbogunovic@rcub.bg.ac.rs](mailto:bbogunovic@rcub.bg.ac.rs)

<sup>1</sup> ESCOM <https://www.escom.org/>

# Reports by National Correspondents of ECHA

## ENGLAND



**HILARY LOWE**

Contact: [hilarylowe@nace.co.uk](mailto:hilarylowe@nace.co.uk)

### The Education of Highly Able Children in England

The education of more or highly able children in England<sup>1</sup> has over time moved in and out of the education policy spotlight, often dependent on the ideological perspectives of the government in power, often on policy and resource priorities and sometimes because the needs of more able learners are deemed to be implicit within the wider aspiration of 'raising achievement/excellence for all'. As we grapple with designing schooling to equip all children for the future, as we understand more about learning itself and the connection between social background and achievement, the question of how best to meet the needs of the very able – and the concept of 'high ability' itself – becomes no less challenging. Nonetheless, in England, through the work of the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) in particular (and e.g. the Sutton Trust) we continue – whatever the policy landscape – to support schools to nurture the special abilities and talents of young people, knowing that realising them is of critical importance to the country and to the young people themselves. And whilst 'More Able' is not currently explicitly foregrounded in national education policy, unlike some periods in the last twenty years, it has nevertheless been a major focus in school accountability measures, through the continued focus on trying to reduce differentials in achievement and social mobility for less advantaged able young people and through reforms to curriculum and assessment intended to raise standards for all learners.

Even the term 'highly able' in the English education context does not carry a universally decreed or accepted definition, neither is there any requirement for schools to keep an official register of

'highly able' children. The definition can encompass the following:

- high attainment as measured by public testing and examination systems
- special and advanced abilities in relation to peers

The Department for Education and Ofsted<sup>2</sup>, the national schools' inspectorate, tend to use the phrase 'Most Able'. Schools variously also use the terminology 'more able and talented', 'high achieving pupils' and less frequently 'high learning potential', 'high academic potential', 'high and advanced performers', with some schools still using the ostensibly outdated terminology of 'gifted and talented'.

The National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) uses the term 'more able', and 'exceptionally able', encompassing learners who are already achieving highly and those who may be underachieving as well as those whose skills and knowledge may extend beyond the school's and public measures of progress.

This 'terminological confusion' may well reflect the range of views, provision and practices – and their quality of provision – across schools in relation to the more able agenda but it also correlates perhaps in a more positive way to how the 'more able' field in the UK is evolving both in theory and in practice. NACE works with a number of schools who acknowledge philosophically and pedagogically the distinctive needs of a discrete group of designated more and highly able learners but also believe that many of the practices recommended for them can be applied for the benefit of a greater group of learners. In other words, this acknowledgement should not prevent schools from allowing 'headroom' for those who, given the right opportunities, could achieve 'academic excellence'. This view has been influenced by evidence emerging from cognitive science and psychology and increasingly complemented by a body of evidence proposing teaching and learning approaches which might enable a wider group of children to become 'higher achievers', including those currently at risk of underachieving.

The number of children not achieving at levels commensurate with their ability and the acknowledgement of so called 'excellence gaps' created by the disproportionate representation of more advantaged children at the highest levels of achievement and in life chances generally remains a key concern. Significant numbers of poorer children fail to make the progress which could be expected of them. Although globally the achievement of all groups has risen and there has been some progress in recent years in narrowing educational gaps by socioeconomic background the disjuncture in attainment between the more and less disadvantaged nevertheless remains despite the number of improvement strategies to this end. Of course there are wider obstacles to social mobility in the UK but they do not diminish the role of education as a bastion of excellence and equity and a key player in driving social mobility through the achievement of the most able.

There is still much to be done to try to create more equitable and high quality provision for more able young people across the school system, including geographically. There are, however, many schools from nursery through to post-16, who have continued to make or are developing good provision for their more able learners and narrowing the 'excellence gaps' – some which are real beacons of excellence and innovation, including for children with the odds not in their favour.

Evidence from Ofsted, from organisations such as the Sutton Trust and from NACE, through its thousands of member schools and several hundred 'Challenge Award'<sup>3</sup> schools, points to some of the defining features of successful schools for more able learners:

<sup>1</sup> The English state school system represents 90% of the provision of for 4-19 year olds and has evolved into a highly diverse one, with the independent sector representing 10% of schooling provision.

<sup>2</sup> Office for Standards in Education

<sup>3</sup> The Challenge Award is a 'quality mark' awarded by NACE to schools demonstrating high quality provision for more able learners against the criteria for in the Challenge Framework school improvement tool. For more information go to [www.nace.co.uk](http://www.nace.co.uk)

- Strong leadership at all levels with a clear and steady vision for learning and achievement for all groups
- Integration between all strands of school policies and practices
- High expectations and no preconceived cap on achievement alongside a clear focus on those already demonstrating high achievement
- Early recognition and 'profiling' of learners' individual strengths and development needs
- Broad, balanced, flexible and rich curricula, with open routes for high aspirations
- Flexible and principled grouping and organisational practices
- Evidence informed practices and an 'enquiry' mindset in staff
- Expert teaching underpinned by strong subject knowledge
- Confident use of formative assessment and feedback and tight checks on progress
- Learners have opportunities to discuss and inform approaches to teaching and learning
- Support given to close attainment gaps, including the 'excellence gaps' between more and less advantaged pupils
- Effective staff development, including strong collaboration
- Partnerships which support the school's mission and curriculum
- Information, advice and guidance taking account of the needs of the most able
- Deliberate development of learners' cultural and social capital
- Effective arrangements for transition between different phases of education, focussed on progression in learning
- Meeting the needs of highly able learners is central to all school planning, arising from the philosophy that 'best practice for able pupils is best practice for all pupils.

In summary, the success of those schools is built on the highest expectations of all learners, a clear vision of how to raise achievement for all, confidence in determining the best approaches for individual learners, together with strong partnerships and an enriched and

demanding curriculum. Alongside strong educational leadership and strong teaching such schools seek out the resources and partnerships which can best support them in realising their aspirations.

Schools successfully providing for the more able deploy in their classrooms many of the 'hallmark' practices of good provision and practice for highly able learners and anchor them securely in a foundation of high quality teaching and learning for all, such as:

- Effective and targeted explanation, scaffolding, dialogue, questioning, modelling, assessment for learning as part of routine repertoires
- The development of advanced literacy and reading skills
- Fostering of independence in learning
- Encouraging 'learning mindsets', resilience and risk taking
- Enhancing metacognition
- Teaching and curricula which balance skills development with building knowledge and cultural capital
- Appropriate sequencing of learning and emphasis on practice
- Attention to strategies which promote deep learning and learning retention
- Planning for progression through challenging learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment practices.

Many schools attribute their success in bringing about high achievement for a wider group of learners to principles for managing classroom learning and teaching such as:

- 'Known thresholds, high challenge, unknown ceilings' (e.g. 'teach from the top' approaches, implying no artificial 'differentiation' limiting learning
- Grouping learners flexibly and on the basis of learners' needs rather than organisational needs
- Prioritising the building blocks of knowledge and subject related skills to increase learners' independence
- Acknowledging that there is no single effective strategy which 'works' for all very able children, as effective classroom provision depends on the learner, the teacher, the curriculum and the context.

NACE has been privileged to work with and support many of these successful schools in improving what they do to enable as many learners as possible to achieve to the best of their ability. Through NACE's Challenge Development Programme, Challenge Review and Improvement Framework and related Award schools (including an increasing number of international ones) can work intensively on their provision for more able learners and gain national recognition for it. We continue also to learn from these schools and to grow capacity in the school system, extending networks of leading schools for more able and leading practitioners. Through our research in these leading schools we aim to deepen our understanding of the pedagogies and wider school provision which support high achievement.

The big headline remains the extent to which schools recognise that all their most able students, whatever their background, need nurturing. The national mission remains to recognise, develop and harness the talents of all young people, using both the resources of schools and wider social and economic change.

**Hilary Lowe** is NACE Education Adviser. She wrote the chapter on 'The education of highly able children in England' in the recently published Sage 'Handbook of Gifted and Talented Education'.

**Johanna Raffan** is National Correspondent for England. She asked Hilary Lowe to contribute this article.

## ESTONIA



### VIIRE SEPP

Contact: [viire@ut.ee](mailto:viire@ut.ee)

Estonia is worldwide known by its high level of IT competencies. Most of the services are available in e-settings for citizens as well as for officials, Skype and a lot of other innovative internet-based solutions have been developed by Estonian programmers. Estonia is the first country to offer e-Residency. An eResident is a foreigner, for whom, as a benefit, Estonia has created a digital identity and issued a digital identity card on the basis of the identification credentials of their own country of citizenship.

Our eGovernment and eResidency are a confirmation that web-based solutions are trustworthy and Estonian programmers who have developed these services have done so in a very high quality. In order to achieve that, 37 000 employees will be needed in the ICT sector by 2020, more than 2000 ICT-professionals a year are needed. That fact places great expectations on the education system.

In February Estonia's first technology report for education, the "Educational Technology Compass" was presented by the Information Technology Foundation for Education (HITSA). It was sort of symbolic that the report appeared just on the 23rd birthday of the Tiger Leap. Tiger Leap was an extraordinary programme to equip Estonian schools with modern ICT tools and to teach programming in schools and even in some kindergartens. Compared to the early days of the Tiger Leap, Estonian youngsters and teachers are more skilful technology users. The report provides expert advice on what they should teach at school and how it can be applied in school life.

According to the experts who drafted the report, we need to find a way to bring technological innovation to schools faster. The current process of curriculum development is too long for this - it can take up to 10 years for learning to innovate.

The first report focuses on five topics: artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, data analysis, virtual and augmented reality, and security in the digital world. For example, with the availability of affordable training kits, learning about the Internet of Things could be started already in primary school, so that you can continue with more serious development projects in high school. Such innovations could raise students' interest in an engineering career.

A lot of schools and NGOs have organized teaching Robotics, Programming and Technology to primary students (age 7-11), more than 200 extracurricular groups are working overall in Estonia. Also, students' interest in the area of IT is supported by different contests. More than 3500 students participated in the Estonian round of the international contest of informatics "Beaver", which covers 45 countries. The number of participants in the Open Contest in Programming and in the Estonian Olympiad in Informatics organized by the University of Tartu reached almost 300 students every year. The University of Tartu and Tallinn University of Technology TalTech have offered programming courses for high school students. An early start of programming and hard independent work is the basis for the success of Estonian students in International, Baltics and European Olympiads in Informatics.

NGO Eesti 2.0 brings together students with practitioners and start-up entrepreneurs from the top of technology. Under the guidance and encouragement of mentors, students find practical and creative solutions for their ideas during the practical programmes.

In 2016 the Estonian STEM Education Union, an umbrella organization for everyone in non-formal STEM education in Estonia, was established. The aim of the Union is to gain and share knowledge in the field and find new partnership opportunities in Estonia and abroad.

Members of the Union are both individuals and organizations: local councils, teachers running their own after-school clubs, hobby-schools, scientists etc. The Union organizes workshops, events and study-

trips for supervisors, rises awareness of STEM education among parents and teachers, and helps students and parents find extracurricular possibilities in the area of STEM, keeping a database of hobby-groups up. The main partner of the Union is the Estonian Research Council.

Also, the other important umbrella organization supporting gifted students was developed in 2016. Due to the reorganization of the former Gifted and Talented Development Centre of the University of Tartu, the main competence in the area of gifted education was concentrated in the NGO Estonian Talent Centre (furthermore ETC). Since October 2017 ETC is a member of the European Talent Support Network as a European Talent Point. ETC is a nationwide competence and information centre in the area of giftedness and talent development. ETC contributes to the development of talented children and youths through sharing proper research-based information on giftedness, counseling parents and schools, gathering information on special programmes for gifted students, initiating extracurricular activities and scholarships for promoting gifted children. ETC is working as a partner for national educational authorities, as well as representing Estonia in European and world-wide networks. In 2016-2018 the project "Notice and support the child's talents" was carried by ETC. The project focused on raising the awareness of parents and teachers in kindergarten and elementary schools of the cognitive and socio-emotional needs of gifted children. More than 15 seminars were organized all over Estonia, also courses for teachers and counseling sessions were provided by members of ETC. The immediate future is to organize talent days in kindergartens. The ETC's main goals for 2019 are the designation the award "Talent supporting institution" to institutions a "Talent Star" to individuals who do excellent work with gifted students. Also, creating a fund to support talented children and their supervisors.

## GREECE



AIKATERINI GARI

Contact: [agari@psych.uoa.gr](mailto:agari@psych.uoa.gr)

### An in depth view of what happens to gifted and talented students in Greece

The two keywords that may shape the education of gifted and talented children in the Greek mainstream educational system seems to be a kind of "inactivity" or "passivity". On the other hand, their parents make amazing efforts to provide them with enrichment activities outside primary and junior high schools and to support effectively their educational development; they often ask for help with great anxiety either in state mental health services and educational system services, recently renamed as "Centres for Educational and Counseling Support", or in profit mental health institutions. As regards gifted and talented adolescents, their families tend more and more to send them for a Bachelor degree or for postgraduate studies mostly to universities of central and northwest European countries or to the United States.

The hard socio-economic crisis that still influences living and working levels of the Greek population also has tremendous effects on the young people's well-being and their plans to be educated and work. According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT, 29.12.2017), more than one million adults out of the total Greek population of approximately 10,8 million people are unemployed. Despite the fact that the unemployment percentage decreased from 2013 to 2017 (from 27.8% to 21.2%), the percentage of constantly unemployed adults remains high, while the percentage of employed (57.8% in 2017) is still much lower than in many other European countries e.g., 73.4% for Portugal, 68.8% for Romania. 65.5% for Spain, or 61.4% for Serbia (EUROSTAT, 2018), while 20.2% of the total Greek population is at risk of poverty. Some additional statistics that may be indirectly associated with the gifted and talented individual's level of well-being also seem to be disappointing, for the period of 2013-2017 (ELSTAT, 2017); 500,000 individuals of ages lower than 40 years, who have acquired a university

degree and have learned more than one foreign language (e.g. physicians, lawyers, engineers and other specialists), have already moved to search for a better life abroad, in the United States, Australia, and Asian countries, with the great majority of them moving to the rest of the European countries. This trend titled as a "braindrain" for this excellent mental subgroup of the Greek population, is more and more commented by some popular newspapers (e.g., the Italian "Il sole 24 ore", February 10th 2019) as a social phenomenon that is gradually increasing in Greece.

The "other side" of the socio-economic crisis effects has to do with the mainstream educational provisions for Greek students. In the PISA project (2015), Greece received low positions in the domains of the Sciences, Reading and Mathematics, for the 15-year-old population. Low achievers in the same subjects were much higher (20.7%) compared to the average of the OECD (13%). In the same direction, the top performing students who presented a lower score than the OECD average in Mathematics, and a much lower score than the OECD average for Sciences, was also closer to the minimum (6.8%), than the OECD average of 15.3%. Additionally, the "top performing score" low level, associated with students' abilities to use abstract scientific concepts, to explain unfamiliar and more complex phenomena, advanced mathematical thinking and reasoning as well as information that requires to locate and organize several pieces of deeply embedded information, seems to depict a clear view of the difficulties that these high achievers are confronted with. Let's also take into consideration that the above percentages are worse than in many other European countries e.g. Italy, France, Spain, or Portugal of the Mediterranean broader area, while those for Mathematics and Sciences are quite close to some other Balkan countries scores e.g. Bulgaria, Slovak Republic, Romania, and Cyprus, but much worse than others such as Slovenia, Poland etc. (<http://www.oecd.org/greece/pisa-2015-greece.htm>). Behind these findings, a fundamental educational value for the Greek family and society is hidden that all children "ought to acquire university knowledge", regardless of their abilities, skills, interests and personality characteristics. For many decades of the

20th century, this value has contributed to the retaining of a complicated set of educational goals for students. These goals mostly focus on students' skills, at the age of 18, to achieve this specific ultimate goal and adopt specific strategies to "learn by heart" what is appropriate for enrolment at a university department, hindering them to form the development of intrinsic learning motivation (Gari, 2003; Gari, & Kalantzi-Azizi, 1998; Gari, Kalantzi-Azizi, & Mylonas, 2000; Gari, Mylonas, & Portešová, 2015). Reorientation of educational values seems to be a great demand for the Greek state educational system and its members. Emphasis for all students' levels of learning potential that has become evident in the international literature, for both mainstream education and for special groups education, seems to be a necessity. Additionally, acceptance and support of all students' educational potential are further needed, for providing a fruitful background for the creative, gifted and talented students' education.

Qualitative results from a recent case study in state primary schools with few gifted students' "family drawings" and "class drawings", of 6-7 years of age, presented an interesting frame for the use of projective techniques during the nomination process of high ability students' abilities and difficulties, illustrating their adaptation and well-being in family and class (Armstrong, 2004; Gari, Papakonstantinou, Mandalidou, Nikolopoulou, & Kokkinos, 2018; Goldner & Scharf, 2011; Knoff, 1990). "Class drawing" seems to be particularly helpful for hypothesizing some emotional and social difficulties, such as social anxiety, need for isolation, or negative feelings for the teacher. "Family drawing" can also provide in depth information about the dynamic within family relationships and its association with school. Finally, a systemic approach of the Greek educational system may also facilitate the nomination of students' high abilities to be grounded on their dynamic interactions with the networks of interdependent relations between students, teachers and family members, and the broader school community (Ziegler & Stoeger, 2017).

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## NETHERLANDS



## ELEONOOR VAN GERVEN

Contact: [info@slimeducatief.nl](mailto:info@slimeducatief.nl)

Since 2008 the Dutch government has invested explicitly in gifted education. In doing so, the government has expressed that providing for gifted education is a national responsibility, similar to its responsibility for students with learning and/or behavioural difficulties. The Dutch government wants to provide the opportunity for schools to create a sustainable approach for educating gifted and talented students without taking control of programme contents, selection criteria and even without defining the notion of giftedness.

The most recent funding programme dates from January 2019. The government made 56 million Euro available for gifted education, to be used by 2022. The money is only available for local school councils. Individual schools or parents and/or caretakers of gifted students can not apply for funding. The condition for collaboration between schools encourages them to share knowledge and resources in a way that contributes positively to the sustainability of the suggested projects. Regional school councils and collaborating schools can apply for financial support for a variety of goals as for instance the continuous professional development for teachers regarding gifted education, pull-out programmes for gifted students in order to stimulate the development for self-regulated learning or the collaboration between schools, experts in giftedness and health care institutions for those students who are in need of very specific support.

I dare to say that the conditional framework for this funding is almost traditionally Dutch. In the conditions for funding, the minister of education talks about gifted education, professionalisation and giftedness in a way that leaves the actual definition of these concepts completely open. Projects can be started as long as they consequently aim to optimise education for students who show the characteristics of gifted learners. This matches the Dutch perspective that education should

provide for the continuous development of every child at school without setting up additional and rigid thresholds to who can apply. School councils or collaborative groups of schools are allowed to design a selection strategy that matches with their perspective on giftedness and gifted education. Educational objectives in these programmes may vary as every organisation may choose these objectives as it sees fit. Educational professionals are entrusted by the government to be able to select professional development courses focussing on gifted education matching their individual perspectives on education in general and gifted education in particular. As there are huge differences in opinions on how to define giftedness, what to see as characteristics of gifted learners and how both influence education a broad range of teacher education courses can be selected.

As the government explicitly aims for the commitment of the applying school councils to their projects, the annual funding is limited to a maximum of 50% of the amount of money that is needed to run the project. School councils are held responsible for the remaining 50% without being allowed to ask parents to support the project financially. An annual evaluation report that shows progression or explains why progression lags resulting in a delayed realisation has been made conditional for the continuation of the funding.

A healthy point of criticism is that this funding is to be seen as an impulse, and although the current minister talks about a structural financial intervention, it is uncertain how a next cabinet with "new political colours" will take up the governmental responsibility towards gifted education. The downside of an impulse is the possibility that projects might be extinct once funding is withdrawn. So maybe the next question should be how the aimed sustainability that must found the current projects can be anchored in education.

## USA



**PAMELA CLINKENBEARD**

Contact: [clinkenp@uww.edu](mailto:clinkenp@uww.edu)

Federal funding for existing university and state Javits grants in the U.S. (with a focus on economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient (LEP), and disabled students) was renewed for the current fiscal year (\$12 million ending Sep. 30, 2019). It is currently not clear if there will be a new Javits grant competition in 2019. The National Center for Research on Gifted Education continues to study schools that have been successful at finding and nurturing underrepresented gifted students as well as gifted English Learners, and reports on their studies are available at <https://ncrge.uconn.edu/>.

With respect to professional associations, the 65th annual convention of the U.S. National Association for Gifted Children was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in November 2018; the 2019 convention will be in Albuquerque, New Mexico, 17-19 November (<http://nagc.org/>). The Association for the Gifted recently met at the Council for Exceptional Children annual conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, and CEC-TAG (<http://cectag.com/>) is now the specialized professional association (SPA) involved with national recognition of gifted education teacher preparation programmes. The American Psychological Association's Center for Gifted Education Policy (<https://www.apa.org/education/k12/gifted>) published the APA Handbook of Giftedness and Talent and The Psychology of High Performance (both 2018) and continues to offer the Top 20 Principles document as a free download ("Top 20 Principles from psychology for PreK-12 creative, talented, and gifted students' teaching and learning"). Researchers in gifted education will meet at the annual American Educational Research Association conference in Toronto, 5-9 April (<http://www.aera19.net/>), including participation in the SIG Research on Giftedness, Creativity and Talent. The 23rd biennial conference of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children will be held in the U.S. this year, in Nashville, Tennessee 24-28 July (<https://worldgifted2019.com/>).

## Spotlight on the Profoundly Gifted Learner: What We Need to Know and Do

**P. SUSAN JACKSON, CANADA**

Formative researcher Lewis Terman (in Burks et al. 1930) noted that "The child of 180 IQ has one of the most difficult problems of social adjustment that any human being is ever called upon to meet" (p. 265). They are the outliers of outliers on the standard curve of human abilities: a remarkable subgroup of the larger gifted populace. The profoundly gifted (PG) oftentimes confound parents, educators and mental-health practitioners – those charged with their support –with their complexity, idiosyncrasies, sensitivities, drive, specific talents, and limitless learning capacities.

In the two final questions posed in the quote below – What to do? Where to go for advice? – we bear witness to the genuine anguish of a father who is raising two PG children. This quote serves as a barometer of the deep, often unmet needs of the parents who raise these extraordinary children, and a pointed reminder that we, as a field, are only beginning to scratch the surface in our understanding and ready support for this gifted subgroup.

It is a reminder that we need to do more.

It is a reminder that our programs and research agendas need to include best practices for ALL gifted children, even those most rare, and perhaps especially those:

"When you learn that your child is a statistical outlier, you quickly realize that there is no book out there that has any meaningful advice for you. Even advanced academic studies of cognitive development tend to be based on sample sizes that number only in the thousands or tens of thousands. Such studies claim that a child cannot do X until he reaches the age of Y, or he cannot do Z until he reaches

the age of Zen. But that is based on a study of, say, 50,000 kids at most. If your kid is less common than 1-in-100,000, or 1-in-1,000,000, none of that applies to him or her. He or she is completely unknown, at least by the experts and the books. Since parents of PG kids tend to be at least gifted themselves, they tend to look to books for answers, but they quickly find there is no help there. So, what to do? Where to get advice?" (Father of two PG children, ages 7 and 10)

### Who are the PG? – More than A Gold-Star Intellect

Pearl S. Buck, American novelist, Pulitzer Prize recipient, awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, wrote the following poem expressing the inner life of a profoundly sensitive and highly creative person:

The truly creative mind in any field is no  
more than this:  
A human creature born abnormally,  
inhumanly sensitive.  
To him...  
a touch is a blow,  
a sound is a noise,  
a misfortune is a tragedy,  
a joy is an ecstasy,  
a friend is a lover,  
a lover is a god,  
and failure is death.

Add to this cruelly delicate organism the overpowering necessity to create, create, create – so that without the creating of music or poetry or books or buildings or something of meaning, his very breath is cut off from him. He must create, must pour out creation. By some strange, unknown, inward urgency he is not really alive unless he is creating. (Inglesias, 2001)

**Core Traits**

PG children, youth and adults are distinguished by their astonishing cognitive processing abilities, incomparable talents, extraordinary sensitivity, and trademark intensities. As outliers of outliers they are as different from moderately gifted children with IQs of 130 as those moderately gifted children are from children with an IQ of 100.

*“Our child read fluently at age 2, and at age 2 spent his free time googling up animal names one-by-one to read about them. By age 6 he spent his free time attending lectures on the latest scientific research, at a major university.”*

(Canadian, now age 10, accelerated one year – radical acceleration in the offspring)

- Capable of often instantaneous and complex pattern making in all phenomena, especially in abstract concepts. Extraordinary Memories.
  - Possessed of uncommon and extraordinary talent, in any number of areas.
- a) Talents may only be strongly evident in one area, or none; there is great variability in the expression of extraordinary potential amongst members of this gifted populace.
  - b) Conversely, may possess (and have activated) many areas of talent.
  - c) The activation of innate potential depends on deep interests, on chance, on available resources, on personal history, on cuing and miscuing variables (in families, especially in education, and, more broadly, in society), on opportunities, and on recognition of their extraordinary abilities.
- Capable of broad and nuanced associative learning.
  - PG learners can be missed. They can be so deeply out-of-step with their own potential (and deep interests) that they are truly missing-in-action: to themselves, and to those around them, at home and at school.
  - Can integrate diverse elements, relationships, or values, with ease, and delight in doing so. It is play for the PG learner. They need access to the right materials to do so.
- Can link ideas that reinforce each other, in seemingly endless loops of understanding. While highly stimulating and deeply affirming it can also be exhausting for the child and sometimes feel like an untamable creature.
  - Coherence seeking: Things need to connect, to be internally consistent and patterns need to make sense. For the PG learner one learned pattern inevitably points to or suggests another pattern, a more complex entity.
  - Analytical (although not always), intuitive (most often powerfully so), with extraordinary cognitive processing capacities.
  - Possessed of a storehouse of complex and dynamic emotions which may, or may not, be in play. We know that emotions need an appreciative audience to develop in healthy ways, to be able to live-out-loud. The PG child, youth or adult needs opportunity to interact with like-minded people in formal, informal and spontaneous ways.
  - Imbued with strong sensual appetites
  - Richly imaginative. They are intimately wedded to an inner life that feeds them. This inner life is fueled by imagination and possibilities and rife with image. This inner life is as real to the PG child as the practical world in front of them. It is life-yet-to-be, a world-that-could-be, and, most importantly IDEAS THAT WILL NOT DIE: concepts that are wiggling-into-existence or slamming themselves with authority into their minds.
  - Driven to learn, often in their own ways with sharply defined interests. Will need room for this and encouragement to complete the (necessary) but less compelling part of learning.,

### **The Profoundly Gifted Child's Learning Program Needs to be Highly Differentiated**

Acceleration, Depth of Inquiry, Student-Driven, True Peers and Best Resources

Programming, mental-health support and parenting protocols need to be highly differentiated to reflect the radical difference between the profoundly gifted and the mildly/moderately gifted.

Anything less is counterproductive and can be harmful to the developing child. In fact, a truism of the PG is that “once is a pattern” which means, amongst other things, that even occasional non-differentiated practices can have lasting and deleterious effects on their psyches and on their natural voracious appetite to learn. For a PG child who excels in Mathematics, for instance, to be forced to study at a much slower pace, with materials and concepts s/he already knows is literally trauma producing. They are intellectually and emotionally primed and ready to learn at a rapid-fire pace, needing much fewer repetitions than a less gifted child (sometimes none). In fact, (unnecessary) repetition is learning death to them and it does not take more than a couple of exposures to “less-than-satisfying” learning experiences for the PG child to shut-down, to lose all interest in a subject, or in learning at all, in an unresponsive or indifferent academic setting.

### **Acceleration is a MUST: including attention to ALL aspects of the PG Learner**

These highly advanced learners need opportunities to go faster, to access and apply much more complex and challenging experiences than their chronological age mates, even those who are more mildly gifted. This can be full-grade acceleration over several grades, it can involve some acceleration in some subjects, but not in others and it will include dual enrolments with post secondary in the later secondary years. IN ALL CASES, the Profoundly Gifted Learner needs to be central to the planning process and ALL parts of the child's development needs to be considered: social development, emotional development, moral development, communicative capacity, their physical bodies, talent areas, gender and psychosexual development. They especially need access to TRUE PEERS – those of a similar learning ability. These true peers may not be of the same age. When they have the opportunity to interact and learn together, they may need help with the initial phases as this may be an entirely novel experience for them.

>>> next page

### Best Learning Resources and Real-Life Opportunities

Pace is not the only moderating variable in the PG learner's set of learning needs: materials need to be of the highest quality possible (the young PG artist is highly sensitive to paint quality, to paper-surface, to optimal lighting);

There should be opportunities for real-life, real-time learning opportunities (the young PG engineer learns best with his/her hands-on materials, with the right materials and environment that allows for complex problem-solving, repeated trials, and emergent concept-building without interruption and censure.)

Depth of inquiry (and independence) in their learning experiences are also significant moderating factors for the PG child. They need to take deep dives, in complex areas of inquiry, oftentimes tapping into rich creative veins, hitherto not evident to teachers or parents. They may need scaffolding with all parts of a planning process. Beginnings are often difficult for the PG learner as their minds flood with seemingly endless possibilities attached to any new line of inquiry. This is entirely normal for the PG child.

Attention to "Learning Holes" and Less developed Aspects of the PG Child's Learning Tool Kit

Sometimes these extraordinary learners will need support, guidance and encouragement to address those aspects of their learning "tool-kit" that is less developed: they may not have mastered basic Math facts while having an innate ability for complex mathematical problem-solving or they may not have developed ways and means to organize themselves (e.g. Executive functioning skills). Sensitivity to the shame that may accompany these less developed areas and careful tutoring that allows them to learn quickly and fully is in order.

Opportunities to define and conduct studies in areas of deep interest: mentors and access to the highest level of knowledge in a subject matter are in order.

**P. Susan Jackson** is the Founder and Therapeutic Director of "The Daimon Institute for the Highly Gifted," White Rock, British Columbia, Canada. The Daimon Institute offers service to exceptionally and profoundly gifted children, youth and adults, supporting the educational needs and overall development of this special population. Patients reside throughout the world, travelling from every continent for face-to-face interventions or receiving support online.

Contact: [daimoninstitute@shaw.ca](mailto:daimoninstitute@shaw.ca)

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### Appendix

The Davidson Institute for Talent Development Marie Capurro, M.Ed., Director of Programs and Services 775.852.DITD ext.405 (phone) 775.852.2184 (fax) [www.davidson-institute.org](http://www.davidson-institute.org)

Talentissimo - The European Platform for the Extremely and profoundly Gifted <https://www.talentissimo.eu/>

Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Centre (GERRIC), The University of New South Wales

### IMPRINT

**Editor ECHA News**  
Annette Heinbokel

**Publisher**  
ECHA News is published by the European Council for High Ability

**Layout**  
Dicks Werbeagentur  
49134 Wallenhorst · Germany  
[info@dicks-werbeagentur.de](mailto:info@dicks-werbeagentur.de)

**Copy ECHA News**  
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**Published by:**  
Carfax Publishing,  
Taylor & Francis Ltd.  
Customer Services Department  
Rankine Road  
Basingstoke, Hants RG24 8PR,  
UK  
[www.carfax.co.uk/has-ad.htm](http://www.carfax.co.uk/has-ad.htm)

## Books for Bookworms


 Teachers' Corner

**SASKIA I. VAN BRUINESSEN,**  
NETHERLANDS

Many gifted readers do not live up to their potential because the reading journey fails to engage them. In the Netherlands libraries have a special corner with easy to read books for children that have difficulty reading but there are no labelled books for gifted readers. The remainder of the children's books in Dutch libraries are arranged by age. The special talent of gifted readers should be recognised (Levande, 1999), but children usually don't search for demanding books themselves (Austin, 2003). They mostly choose books that their age peers are reading (Baskin & Harris, 1980).

Gifted children are talented in language and have a huge vocabulary at an early age (van Gerven, 2002). They usually commence reading and writing spontaneously even before starting school (Mönks & Ypenburg, 2011). Schnur and Marmor (2009) found that gifted children will like quality books when young people with giftedness in language play a role in the story. Austin (2003) says such professional role models will challenge the gifted reader. She uses *Books for the Gifted Child* (Baskin & Harris, 1980) which in her opinion have not been surpassed (personal communication, February 10, 2018).

Barbara Baskin and Karen Harris (1980) are a valuable resource for those interested in meeting the reading needs of gifted children. Their views on books for the gifted child are still a good fundament for teachers, librarians and parents who are willing to motivate gifted children to read more demanding reading fare. Their view is that books can help intellectual growth for gifted children if books are selected that demand higher levels of cognitive functioning such as analysis, creation and evaluation. This means the higher levels of cognitive functioning in the renowned taxonomy of Bloom.

**Higher cognitive domains of Bloom's pyramid**

Saskia van Bruinessen (2018) explores which books gifted primary school children in the Netherlands prefer and professionals in children's books choose when asked about book components that use these higher cognitive domains of Bloom's pyramid.

Gifted children in the Netherlands, 65 in total, filled out a questionnaire. These children chose 81 books (series) mostly because they were "funny" and "exciting", like the Treehouse books by Andy Griffiths. Eight professionals were asked to list books that correspond to specific book components. These components were based on a literature research and included properties such as having giftedness as a theme and pronounced language use, structure and perspective. Books recommended by 3 professionals are *Lampje* by Annet Schaap and *Wonderkinderen* by Thea Beckman, both authors from the Netherlands. Dutch author Edward van de Vendel was mentioned by 5 professionals. The only books which corresponded between the children and the professionals were *Lampje* and the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series by Jeff Kinney. Professionals and children mentioned Roald Dahl as an author, judged on the theme of giftedness and his language use.

A book has to be funny and/or exciting to be attractive to gifted children. The preferred books in this exploration are part of a series translated from the most commonly promoted English graphic book series. These are not books exclusively mentioned by professionals. Teachers, librarians and parents should therefore help gifted children choose more demanding books that address the higher levels of cognitive functioning.

*Saskia van Bruinessen (MA) received her ECHA-certificate at the conference 2018 in Dublin as a result of this research. She has since then set up an after school discovery group 'Ontdekclub' for gifted children and is busy founding fulltime education for gifted children in the North of the Netherlands.*

Contact: [saskia@inter4u.nl](mailto:saskia@inter4u.nl)

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# German Association for Research and Promotion of Aptitudes Dissolved

HELGA JOSWIG, GERMANY

At the 26th assembly of the members of the „Arbeitskreis Begabungsforschung und Begabungsförderung (ABB)“ on 17th December 2018, the members decided to dissolve the association. Its chairman, Christoph Perleth (University of Rostock), pointed out the significance and the merits of this German association during the 25 years of its existence. Especially in the first 10 to 15 years the association played a pioneering role in the area of research and promotion of aptitudes<sup>1</sup> and gave important input in research and the practical implementation of aptitude and giftedness.

The initiative to found ABB sprang from an international scientific conference organized in June 1990 (the time of the 'Wende'<sup>2</sup>) by the faculty of education of the University of Rostock<sup>3</sup> on the theme of the promotion of aptitudes. During this conference the sharing of thoughts and experiences of scientists in education of the two German states was deepened and broadened. Harald Wagner (who became chairman of ABB in 1997) delivered greetings as ECHA's representative. Otto Lange (for many years member of its executive committee) presented a paper on the "Promotion of Aptitudes through Differentiation during Lessons". Scientists of the University of Rostock presented the results of research as well as practical educational experiences with research and the promotion of aptitudes. The University of Rostock was represented by Horst Drewelow. During the conference called "Developing, Diagnosing and Promoting Aptitudes", organized in November 1990 in Hannover on the initiative of Klaus K. Urban, the majority of participants from East and West Germany decided to form an „Arbeitskreis Begabungsforschung und Begabungsförderung“. They passed a resolution directed at scientists in education of the now 'old' and 'new' states of the Federal Republic of Germany and the neighbouring European countries, members of parliaments, governments

as well as all researchers in education, requesting them to increase their attention towards the promotion of aptitudes as well as including it in regulations for schools, in educational concepts and in teacher training and in-service training. After the founding of the working group the association itself was founded in June 1991 in Hannover. Members of the Executive Committee were Klaus K. Urban, University of Hannover, chairman, Horst Drewelow, University of Rostock and Otto Lange, University of Oldenburg, both deputy chairmen, Regine Pauls, University of Leipzig, secretary, Fred Dosenbach, treasurer.

ABB hosted the first major series of symposia in Germany dealing with research and the promotion of aptitudes, some of them together with MINT-EC<sup>4</sup>. It published the presentations of the symposia, informing about and discussing the latest scientific results. Research of the literature shows how the association's aim to strengthen scientific communication and cooperation, justifying and spreading the idea of promoting aptitudes as a basic educational and psychological concern as well as promoting the transfer of findings of interdisciplinary research and accelerating its implementation became more and more a reality.

There were three to four newsletters each year called "ABB Information", the last one was issued in 2011; they were very influential in realizing ABB's aims. Outstanding service in editing the newsletter rendered Horst Drewelow, Otto Lange and Klaus K. Urban. From 2012 onwards ABB Information was published in a new form, as a yearbook edited by Wilfried Manke, Volker Brand and Claas Wegner. It contains scientific contributions as well as practical examples, written by members of ABB. So far there are seven issues, the last one for 2018 will be published in spring 2019.

The members of ABB who are still active will continue their work in the research and promotion of aptitudes in

different associations and organisations, e.g. WCGTC and ECHA – there was an affiliated status with the two -, the ICBF in Münster, the ÖZBF in Salzburg and the FH in central Switzerland in Brugg. We state that the aims of the association, to put gifted education in the public focus of education and research, have been achieved. Our initiatives have been picked up and carried on by the Federal State and the German states in the programme "Leistung macht Schule" (Lema<sup>5</sup>). We wish everybody, who shares our concern of promoting the basic idea research and promotion of aptitudes, success and hope for cooperation in future.

*Translation: Annette Heimböckel*

**Helga Joswig** is Professor of the Psychology of Education at the University of Rostock

Contact: [helga.joswig@uni-rostock.de](mailto:helga.joswig@uni-rostock.de)

<sup>1</sup> For those speaking German: the German word is 'Begabung', one of those words that are hard to translate into English. 'Aptitude' does not quite fit the meaning in German.

<sup>2</sup> 'Wende' (→ turning point) is the word used in German for the time when the border between East and West Germany came down

<sup>3</sup> The city of Rostock is on the Baltic coast in what was then the German Democratic Republic, so scientists from East and West meeting for a conference like that without restrictions was a momentous event.

<sup>4</sup> MINT is the German abbreviation for the English STEM: **M**athematik – **I**nformatik – **N**aturwissenschaften – **T**echnik

<sup>5</sup> Can be very loosely translated as "Achievements catch on".