

GIFT RAP

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2007 Volume 7 Edition 8

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Clustering vs. Integration of Gifted Students

(by O.S.)

There are many school boards grappling with the "problems" of gifted education. The options are: limited withdrawal programs, clustering or full integration into the regular classroom.

Clustering

If there is a low student-teacher ratio, as is the case in many withdrawal programs, or if teachers work full-time with small classes of gifted children, it can be very expensive. A solution is clustering or bringing gifted students together to form regular-sized classes. Teachers take on a full load of course teaching and students are in a regular classroom setting.

Many parents like this idea because it gives their "bright lights" a chance to shine with others who are equally bright. The pace of learning often speeds up and there is less boredom. Assignments can be designed to be

challenging, go into greater depth and breadth and allow for greater student self-direction

Students get extra attention and teaching, but also get to stay in the same classroom and be with other high achievers all day long.

The biggest benefit of clustering is intellectual challenge. Once a gifted student demonstrates mastery of the regular curriculum, the teacher can then offer a deeper understanding of the subject learned.

Clustering works well only if teachers are fully trained, skilled and well qualified to teach gifted children. Untrained teachers often fall back on standard teaching practices and add more work instead of differentiated work. This is often a real turn-off for gifted students.

Clustering works well for students and teachers if specific conditions are met.

Integration

There are school boards that want gifted students fully integrated into regular classrooms. They expect that all teachers are able to handle all students at all levels. It is understandable to want students to be exposed to other students and learn to learn with them.

Most classrooms today have students with special needs, challenges, and/or disabilities working alongside regular students. It is difficult for teachers to be all things for all students especially if the needs of some are so much greater. Unfortunately, educating gifted students is at times considered to be elitist and their needs dismissed.

For fully integrated classrooms, teachers need extensive training in gifted education.

Both clustering and integrating gifted students offer benefits and disadvantages. The key to success in both situations is properly trained and in-serviced teachers who know how to work effectively with gifted students.

NOTE: In Ontario, several-school boards are in process to eliminate their gifted programs and have gifted students integrated full time in regular classes.

A future issue of "Gift Rap" will detail what is happening.

Ontario Ministry "Education for All" document advocating full integration of all special education students

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/speced/panel/speced.pdf>

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Amazing Websites

Quirky Museums (creative, funny, world-wide)
<http://www3.tky.3w100eb.ne.jp/~edjacob/museums.html>

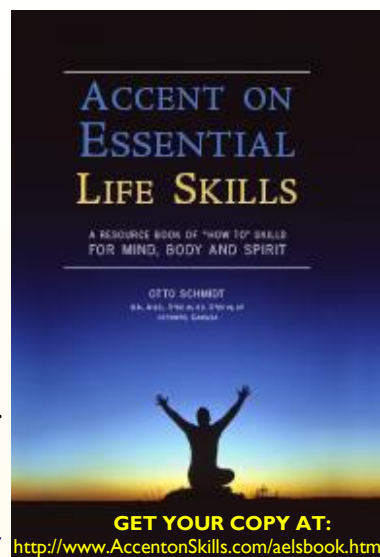
10 Strangest Office Gadgets
<http://www.techeblog.com/index.php/tech-gadget/top-10-strangest-office-gadgets>

Strangest Lego Creations
<http://www.techeblog.com/index.php/tech-gadget/top-10-strangest-lego-creations>

Virtual Worlds (visit 2D & 3D ancient Greece, Egypt, etc.)
http://www.learningsites.com/Frame_layout01.htm

Redeye Photo Resources (see the Photomobile—traveling photo centre) <http://www.redeye.org.uk>

Students Help Free Modern Slaves <http://www.lc2lc.org/>



News and Views

Let's Celebrate!

- Aug 6 – Civic Holiday
- Aug 9 – International Day of Indigenous People
- Aug 11 – City of Toronto Taxi Driver Appreciation Day
- Aug 12 – International Youth Day
- Aug 23 – International Day of Slave Trade and its Abolition
- Aug 28 – Full Moon tonight
- August (last Wed of month) - World's Biggest Tomato Fight - Bunyol, Spain

Unusual New Sports

(from an article by Andrew Chung, Toronto Star)

Most people don't think twice about possible new sports. The old ones seem just fine as they have been around for many, many years.

There are, however, people who come up with new ideas and twists on old ones. Here are some sports that are slowly gaining momentum in the athletic world:

Blackminton

Use black lights in a darkened room. Become a human glow stick with body paint and also put some color on the special birdie that has a tube in it. This is a high speed game in the dark.

<http://www.speedminton.co.uk/Blackminton-R.16.0.html>

Speedminton

This German game is going global in interest. It blends badminton, squash and tennis. Use a special racquet that looks like the one for squash. The shuttlecock is stouter and heavier and can travel up to

300 km/h when played in the back quarters of a tennis court. <http://www.speedminton.com>

Underwater Hockey is gaining in popularity.

<http://www.uwhworlds2006.net/>

Snowkiting is like kitesurfing.

<http://www.snowkiting.com/>

Tchoukball is like handball and dodgeball.

<http://www.tchoukball.org/>

Accepted sports that were at one time unusual:

- Snowboarding

- Beach Volleyball

Unusual Discontinued Olympic Sports

<http://www.topendsports.com/events/discontinued/unusual.htm>

Unusual Sports Cards

<http://www.oddball-mall.com/>

Unusual Sports & Hobbies

http://members.tripod.com/~Armchair_Philosopher/sporting.html

Unusual Sports Movies

<http://www.greencine.com/list?action=viewList&listID=6750>

Greatest Failed Nations in the World (from an article by Olivia Ward, Foreign Affairs Reporter, Toronto Star)

What is a failed state? What determines it has failed?

Weak states are not only dangers to themselves but also to other countries as regimes and governments fall or are taken over. Somalia has collapsed from war and poverty. Weak states are threats to national security of other countries. Weak or falling states have the following in common: vulnerable to internal violence, uncontrolled borders, social unrest, lack of basic freedoms, gross inequalities, inability to deliver public services, weakly regulated but economically and militarily powerful, authoritarian/iron-fisted rule, .

Some of these countries are easy places for terrorists and other criminal networks to organize. They are also the places where corruption, violence, fraud and counterfeiting are rampant because there is connection to the global economy and commerce.

Index of Failed States: 1. Sudan 2. Iraq 3. Somalia 4. Zimbabwe 5. Chad 6. Ivory Coast 7. DR of Congo 8. Afghanistan 9. Guinea 10. Central African Republic 11. Haiti 12. Pakistan 13. North Korea 14. Burma 15. Uganda 16. Bangladesh 17. Nigeria 18. Ethiopia 19. Burundi 20. East Timor (Foreign Policy magazine)

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We welcome creative contributions to this newsletter. Send us your articles or ideas, jokes, wise words, fun activities, letters, trivia.

E-Mail to:

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Back issues are on the link page



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Computer Top Tip

When copying and pasting into MS Word, often the style and format of your working original and the newly pasted don't match. Never paste formatted text into a

document without doing this first.

Copy the chosen words to the clipboard, click "Edit" and then click "Paste Special", then click "Unformatted Text". When pasted, the words will now continue to be in the same format as the original.

Bathe in Luxury (from an article by Andrew Chung, in Toronto Star)

Know anybody that is too lazy to draw their own bath? If you are that wealthy and also that in need, the Fairmont Hotel in Chicago offers a rare treat.

Call room service and a specialist will come to your room, mix salts, add fragrances, lay out a mat, provide slippers and a plush robe, light candles, drop rose petals or orchids on the water which is heated to just the right temperature, set out a fresh bowl of berries, and dim the lights.

Choose a theme, include mint, milk, sugar, and mud. On special days you might have a Xmas chocolate peppermint bath or a cinnamon bath on St. Valentine's Day.

If you love to be pampered and also spend money, it will only cost about \$60.

<http://centerstagechicago.com/hotels/fairmont.html>

History of Bathing before 1601
<http://www.gallowglass.org/jadwiga/herbs/baths.html>

Tidbits of Trivia

- a single colony of bees can produce 45 kg of extra honey that is harvested by a bee-keeper.
- bees fly the equivalent of more than twice around the world to gather a kilo of honey.
- a honey bee flies about 24 km/h and the wings beat about 200 times per second.
- traffic injuries are the leading cause of death in people

- ages 10 to 24 around the world according to the World Health Organization.
- Workers tearing down casinos in Las Vegas have found up to \$17,000 in loose coins dropped behind machines and furniture.
- a bride stands to the groom's left at a wedding so his sword hand is free. An-

glo-Saxon brides were often kidnapped before a wedding and brawls were common. That's why the best man stands with the groom; the tribe's best warrior was there to help the groom defend the bride.
 - by 2012, the U.S. will have more private security guards than high school teachers. (Dept. of Labor)

Interesting Reading

Are We Rome? by Cullen Murphy. Comparison of the present U.S. to ancient Rome. Is the US going to decline and fall in the way Rome did?

Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary by Alice Sparberg Alexiou. A portrait of one of the most influential people in the urban planning field.

Planet of Slums by Mike Davis. A picture of our world where 1 billion poor live in slums of third world cities.

The Only Boy in the World: A Father Explores the Mysteries of Autism by Michael Blastland.

The Brief History of the Dead by Kevin Brockmeier. An epidemic devastates Earth.

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more

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How to Be More Creative

(by O.S.)

1. Look at things you don't normally see. Find beauty and wonder. Study how things are made and then apply that sense of awe and newness of experience to other things in life.
2. When you have an idea, write it down. Look at it occasionally and let the idea incubate for a while. Collect ideas for development. They will sometimes inter-relate to produce new ideas.
3. Visualize and fantasize scenes in detail and color and do related in-depth investigative problem-solving.
4. Be extra alert during the time between going to bed and falling asleep when ideas come more freely and spontaneously. As well, be just as alert during the time when you first awake and get up. Keep paper and pen close to your bed to write ideas down at any time in the night.
5. Look at existing things and dream about improving them in some way.
6. Write often. Start with anything and become a spectator to the ideas your mind creates and elaborates on during Free-Flow Writing.

Gandhi's Seven Deadly Sins (source:
<http://www.mkgandhi.org/mgmnt.htm>)

Mahatma Gandhi said seven things will destroy us on a personal and world level. Social and political conditions that destroy standards, go counter to natural laws and principles. Social values are not of prime importance.

Wealth Without Work: getting something for nothing. This involves manipulating people and circumstances but not producing anything of value for self or others. It involves speculating, risk taking, and lying for personal gain. Perspective is distorted. We all share the burden of looking after our societies and the earth.

Pleasure without Conscience: "What's in it for me?" Work, duties, effort are directed at rewards for the self. Many things are done without conscience or discernment. Little thought is given to reputation, consequences, emotional effects. Much of today's business world is affected by this. To learn to be giving, selfless, generous toward others is our challenge.

Knowledge without Character: a little knowledge can be dangerous without personal principles that govern its use. Specialization, centralization, and over intellectualizing are a problem. Pure intellectual development is not enough.

Commerce (Business) without Morality (Ethics): our economies and social wellbeing depend on companies and governments acting in an ethical way. Rationalizing, hidden agendas, secrecy, and using the excuse that it is only business cause problems. The Golden Rule (treat others as you wish them to treat you) and consideration of a win-win situation are in accordance with natural laws.

Science without Humanity: technique, procedures and technology are valuable but can degenerate into man versus humanity. Inequalities and injustices continue and grow without the sense of humanity involved. Science should be for the betterment of life and mankind.

Religion without Sacrifice: there is a difference between going to a place of worship and living the tenets of the faith. Outward appearances easily mask the realities of corruption. A sense of oneness with others comes from humility.

Politics without Principle: a personality with ethics sells well to others. Politics can be image, superficiality and lacking in depth and substance. Power, fame and wealth are the goals. Disorganization and demoralization are the result. We are ultimately all created equal and have rights and privileges as individuals and as a society. Teamwork works. A social will and sense of due process are important.



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The Secrets of Nanotechnology (by O.S.)

In early June I attended the 45th weekend conference called the Advanced Technology Think Tank. One of the most fascinating presentations was on the advancements in nanotechnology.

This fast growing area of science deals with controlling matter that is smaller than 1 micrometer and normally between 1-100 nanometers. A nanometer is 1 billionth of a meter. This is roughly the distance a fingernail grows in 1 second.

In the presentation by Chris Phoenix, Director of Research, Center for Responsible Nanotechnology, he explained that present research is focused on how to manipulate and control individual atoms. With the deliberate placement of different atoms, any kind of matter or device can be constructed in a way much like joining pieces of a Lego set to form a structure. Imagine manufacturing almost anything by controlling the construction at an atomic level!

Anyone who has watched Star Trek has probably seen the Replicator that produces meals and objects upon voice command. We are at the very earliest stages of being able to actually do that!

In the medical world, it will be possible to direct nano-robots to destroy individual cancer cells. Manufacturers will be able to build almost any material goods by directing the arrangement of the appropriate atoms.

We can already produce microchips using a beam of atoms to "draw" on silicon disks. We can suspend single atoms using electromagnetic fields. Replicating or manufacturing something atom by atom may be considered reality in the distant future but it appears today to be potentially possible.

Center for Responsible Nanotechnology

<http://crnano.org/>

The Science of Star Trek

http://ssdoo.gsfc.nasa.gov/education/just_for_fun/startrek.html

How Nanotechnology Works (moving visuals)

<http://science.howstuffworks.com/nanotechnology.htm>

Nanotechnology Video re Cancer Treatment

http://nano.cancer.gov/resource_center/video_journey_qt-low.asp

Nanofactory Animation Video

(DO NOT MISS THIS! SEE THE OTHER ONLINE VIDEOS ON THE RIGHT SIDE)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqyZ9bFl_qg

Educators of the Gifted Organization (EdGO)

[FORMERLY Educators of the Gifted of Ontario -Teachers Association for the Gifted of Ontario (EDGOTAGO) Toronto, Canada]

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**Published by:
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Jokes of the Month

They say animal behavior can warn you when an earthquake is coming. Like the night before that last earthquake hit, our family dog took the car keys and drove to Arizona (Bob Hope/Gene Perret)

I believe Dr. Kevorkian is onto something. I think he's great. Because suicide is our way of saying to God, "You can't fire me. I quit." (Bill Maher)

I bought a box of animal crackers and it said on it "Do not eat if seal is broken." So I opened up the box, and sure enough... (Brian Kiley)

If you love something, set it free. If it comes back, it will always be yours. If it doesn't come back it was never yours to begin with. But, if it just sits in a La-Z-Boy, smells up the bathroom, watches sports center and doesn't have a clue that you had set it free, you're probably married to it.

What Will They Invent Next?

Kumho Tire Company introduced the first "Aroma" tires that have fragrance incorporated into their development. The new tires deliver an alluring aroma that replaces the usually black rubber smell. The scents are lavender, orange and jasmine and will be all over North America soon. Get your noses tuned up drivers! Driving will be a whole new experience.

Related News Article <http://www.i4u.com/article7556.html>

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Wise Words of Wisdom

"Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts." - Aristotle

"Endeavor to so live that when you die even the undertaken will be sorry." - mark Twain

"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken." - James Dent

Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability.—Sam Keen

A life without love is like a year without summer.—Swedish Proverb

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