

Accent on Educating the Highly Intelligent

*environments and activities
that nurture giftedness*

Cigdem Celik-Sahin & Otto Schmidt



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AWAKE YOUR INNER POWER



Ancient wise saying: "Give someone a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach someone how to fish and you feed them for a lifetime."

In our skills-based book, you will find many practical and helpful ways to add zest and vigor to learning. We give you concrete information that you can use instantly. We provide lesson ideas, real-life examples, simulations, games, activities, club ideas, learning enrichment activities, guides to designing activities, and practical ways to help children create their own learning. Parents and educators will be able to provide more effective help as bright children become more independent and self-directed learners who produce new learning and information.

-Cigdem and Otto

Foreword

When the world's many, seemingly intractable problems cross my mind – which seems to happen frequently these days – I find it difficult to stay optimistic about the future. “What kind of world are we leaving our children?” I wonder. More to the point, what kind of world am I leaving my children?

Yet despite all the causes for concern, there is plenty of room for optimism. People are working together, often across countries, to solve our many problems, and many of the world's most talented people are strongly devoted to improving the lives of others. Lifting families out of the cycle of poverty, access to schooling for young people regardless of gender, race, or caste, technological advances with the potential to improve millions of people's lives – much progress has been made over the past generation.

But we have the responsibility to do more. A specific step we can take is to provide future generations with the tools to improve the world we leave them. One strategy we can use is to ensure that all students are academically and intellectually challenged. Around the globe, we appear to do a decent job of this for many if not most children. But the research strongly suggests that highly intelligent children rarely have their needs met in schools.

The price of this neglect can be staggering. Whether measuring impact in terms of lost economic development, missed opportunities to improve our communities and cultural lives, or failure to improve the quality of life for these students and their families, the costs of neglecting the education and development of our most talented students are real and tangible.

Furthermore, when we fail to develop the talents of our highly intelligent children, we exacerbate excellence gaps – unnecessary differences in achievement between groups of talented students. For example, if talented students from middle class backgrounds do not have their intellectual needs met, the odds are pretty good that their families will seek out other opportunities to develop those skills; equally talented students from economically vulnerable families may not even know about those opportunities, and their families may not have the means to gain access to those programs even if they know such programs exist. Providing a high level of appropriate services for all highly intelligent children is a promising strategy for stabilizing – and potentially even reversing – excellence gaps.

And despite decades of neglect, the global situation for highly talented students is beginning to improve. Several countries are increasing services for their academically promising students, and many others are exploring ways in which they can better support these children.

It is within this global context that I read Dr. Celik-Sahin and Mr. Schmidt's book, and I was impressed by its thoughtful approach to the topic, which is not surprising given their extensive experience working with highly talented students. The authors provide a very comprehensive overview of the major issues involved in teaching, counseling, and parenting gifted children, with special attention to interventions to challenge these students and help deal with common academic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal issues faced by talented students. Anyone new to the topic will come away from the book with a strong foundation, and veterans will gain a truly global perspective on how best to support and work with gifted children and adults.

This book comes at the right time, as policymakers and educators turn their attention to this critically important yet occasionally fragile group of people. In reading this book, I hope you will share my opinion that there are many reasons for optimism as we move well into the 21st century.

Jonathan A. Plucker, Raymond Neag Endowed Professor of Education, University of Connecticut, USA

Preface

There are many valuable books and other resources that support gifted education in many ways. We want to add ours to that list.

This book is intended to provide a one-stop, comprehensive, encompassing source of background information, methods, approaches, resources, environments, activities, and perspectives that will motivate and assist educators and parents in the education of the gifted children and adults in their charge.

It is vital that highly intelligent people – young and old - are educated in a way that brings out their best so they use their skills, talents, and abilities most effectively. From experience in many different environments and countries, it is becoming painfully evident that a knowledge/facts/information based education is no longer going to be sufficient. As an alternative, it is proposed that people, especially gifted ones, will achieve at their best through an emphasis on personal competency skills training. This is perhaps one of the best ways to help highly intelligent young people meet the many new challenges to continually produce new ideas, products/services, and deal with intensified global competition. Gone are the "good old days" when long-term, stable jobs were readily available.

Young people going into the workforce must realize that they are more and more in charge of their futures. They must create their own jobs and opportunities. To be an entrepreneur is becoming more and more the norm.

The world has changed dramatically since even the end of the 20th century. Things happen at a faster pace and people are challenged to master learning and skills faster. There is less security in jobs and incomes so people need to become entrepreneurs and creators of their own jobs and work. The need to establish and maintain relationships with almost anybody around the world has a major shift for many people.

The contents of our book will help those working with the highly intelligent meet the above demands. Teach people how to learn, not what to learn. Let us show you how to do that.

Ultimately, educators and parents must be prepared to change the paradigm. In Alvin Toffler's book "Future Shock" it was mentioned that those who had the knowledge would be most valuable. We have gone past that.

Those who know what to creatively do with the knowledge are becoming the most valuable people in our societies.

Skills that help people to use knowledge more effectively are more important than the acquisition of the knowledge. Education cannot continue to rigorously control the content and quantity of learning within lessons. Students, especially very intelligent ones, can cover more learning in a faster time on the internet than any teacher could conceivably provide. What they are lacking, however, is the ability to assess, analyze, discern, compare, conclude, synthesize, etc. These skills need to be taught directly.

If the emphasis is on skills development, as we propose, all learners, not just highly intelligent ones, become independent (decide whether to work alone or with others), self-directed (choose the directions of learning), and producers of new learning, not just consumers. At the very least, we invite you to debate and discuss the approaches we advocate as strongly as we do. It is our wish and hope, however, that our perspective is a valuable one and worthy of being embraced and used in educating highly intelligent people.

Cigdem Celik-Sahin

Otto Schmidt

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From Part 5 on Counseling the Gifted

Here are some ways to improve the attitudes and enjoyment of learning in gifted students:

a) Build New and Better Habits

Some people suggest we replace old bad habits with new habits in order to improve ourselves. There is an alternative to this from a different perspective. Consider that old habits are with us and we can't really rid ourselves of them. We can learn new habits which pile on top of the old habits and eventually smother them. Bad habits become virtually lost, deeply buried, and rarely surface because they are so far below the new habits.

In school, students frequently suggest that they will never use much of what they are learning. In reality, all subjects are important and that way of thinking can be very important in making learning interesting. The various subjects help train our minds to think analytically and teach how to think about processes. According to Daniel Willingham, a cognitive scientist and author of *Why Students Don't Like School*, the human brain is constantly trying ...

b) Organize Thinking

Educators themselves must first learn and become proficient in the many ways of organizing thinking before they teach their gifted students. Students need to be aware of these skills that provide organization and sequencing of ideas: analytical thinking, deductive and inductive thinking, critical thinking, and creative thinking. Gifted students should practice them and be expected to show them consistently. Students should work at high standards set for them and be expected to meet them consistently, e.g. doing in-depth analyses of ...

c) Find and Fill the Gaps

Educators help gifted students assess what they know and what they do not know about problems and assignments provided in class. All problems - personal and impersonal, big or small, important or trivial - need to be looked at from different perspectives. It is important to realize that when not enough information is available, judgment must be suspended, additional research must be done, and then solutions can be determined and activated. Once solutions are found, judgment must again be suspended in order to assess them and determine the best one (not the perfect one). It will again be important to be aware of what might be missing that might affect implementation to a satisfactory conclusion.

d) Repeat Good Behavior

Once a student has improved to become more disciplined, rotate the newly learned skills and information into other areas of learning. Find out what to use to fill in gaps in a problem. Find interesting patterns that can fit into other learning situations.....

From Part 7 on Studying Educators in Gifted Programs

Qualities of Great and Not So Great Instructors/Facilitators of the Gifted

Great teachers of the gifted are a rare breed. They stand out dramatically from the ordinary teacher and even from very good teachers. First of all, they love teaching and learning – as should all teachers. They have a

twinkle in the eye because they know what exciting learning is all about and feel very privileged to be able to work on developing that love of learning in gifted students. These teachers are flexible, open-minded, resilient, and are willing to risk letting students see them as people rather than just as teachers. The barriers are lowered in the teacher-student relationship and this enhances learning together.

Great teachers of the gifted also enjoy establishing deeper relationships with their students. This must be done carefully, appropriately, and with great discretion and transparency but can involve sharing strengths and weaknesses with students in a group setting. It can also mean contacting students during off-school hours to notify them of special opportunities for enrichment or rare experiences ...

Many not-so-great teachers of the gifted, if not most, are not professionally trained to work with gifted students at any age. In some cases, they are teachers who are assigned the gifted class position because they are new to the school and nobody else wants to do the job. Some may be just fresh into teaching without any courses on giftedness, have no seniority and flounder because they are intimidated by their class of highly intelligent students. In some cases, these teachers are close to retirement, burned out, and because of union power, they can under-serve the gifted without any serious reprimands or admonishments.

There are some who take it upon themselves to be in-serviced to do it effectively but, from experience, many do that to have just enough information to do their job reasonably well. They learn to do things and give learning to gifted students that they usually like but they don't ...

Some not-so-great gifted teachers are intimidated by gifted students, especially very young ones, who can converse and sometimes compete quite well with adults on an intellectual level. They resort back to their authoritarian ways and become more conventional teachers because they feel safer in that position. They give gifted students additional gifted-related work to occupy their time or have them work independently on computer programs that are recommended as suitable for gifted students. Students may be unsupervised and alone for great lengths of time and may be doing.....

From Part 12 on Developing Skills-Based Curriculum

Philosophy and Considerations in Creating a Skills-Based Gifted Program

Overall Objective – A skills-based curriculum supports the content-based one used by most educators in all areas of education. It is not intended to be a replacement for existing mandated curriculum but rather an enhancer and intensifier. As educators practice and gain experience in using them, skills become more important while teaching. All schools can eventually shift emphasis to skills as the acquisition of knowledge by using the suggested approach becomes less important. Students are empowered and create better products after using the content of learning more effectively.

Foundational Belief – Skills training is more important than acquiring information, knowledge and facts. Skills take people farther than knowledge.

Aims, Goals, Objectives – Make students self-directed, independent learners who eventually produce new learning rather than just consume the old.

Keeping Standards Aligned with Government-Approved Curriculum – Skills training can take place during the regular school day if teaching time is controlled slightly differently. Compacting or simply being more rigorous in condensing lessons to essentials and leaving

Process of Instruction – Instructors in gifted programs must feel secure within themselves while working with highly intelligent students and willing to learn along and from them...

Program Management – School/board/program administrators and managers, along with instructors must be prepared to oversee gifted programs/schools somewhat differently from other educational programs. A collegial and team approach is important. Flexibility, supportiveness...

Designing a Skills-Based Curriculum: A 4-Step Approach

Step 1: List Competency Skills

Gather "how to" skills and sort them into levels of relevancy and importance. Many useful ones are below. Others are found in "Accent on Essential Life Skills" resource book. (*Add others to this list as found*)...

- Accept chores and responsibilities
- Analyze
- Assess degree of influence
- Be a viable member of a group
- Be at peace with oneself
-

Managing Time When Learning Skills

Most people will say they could use their time more efficiently. Here are tips that help gifted learners make every moment count whether they are working in school or at home or just relaxing:

Set Goals - Gifted students need to learn how to establish short-term, mid-term and long-term goals at work and play. Be specific and realistic. Review them often and regularly. Post them where they can be seen every day. What do the words mean? Think of using a bow and arrow. AIMS (I found it and I want to practice shooting arrows at the target in the distance), GOALS (I want to hit the colored part of the target when I shoot my arrow) and OBJECTIVES (I want to hit close to the middle of the target at least 5 times in a row)

Learn to Postpone – Not Do Without. Gifted students need to learn and rehearse saying "No" to things that friends and/or others want them to do. Some may be reclusive and perhaps need to learn to say "yes." Time will be saved or used for doing more valuable things. Not everything needs to be done immediately...

From Part 13 on Enrichment

Teacher-Directed	Student-Directed
<p>a) In Class e.g. open-ended projects related to a subject (History: Prepare a poster advertising the platform of a political party. Follow the progress of the party.)</p> <p>b) Out of Class e.g. trips and excursions (Civics: Student(s) visit(s) a city planning department to learn about bylaws. Some students may return to deepen the learning.)</p> <p>c) Do-It-Yourself e.g. bring in a personal study (History: antiques or photographic slides relating to royal coronations. Religion: invite someone who collects holy books to talkand more</p>	<p>a) In Class e.g. a student wants to do a study that is not on a list of topics that the teacher has prepared (English: Mythology Found in Lord of the Flies)</p> <p>b) Out of Class e.g. visits, conferences, festivals (attend an adult leadership conference - visit a shop that makes hand-made guitars)</p> <p>c) Do-It-Yourself e.g. become an expert (Student wants to help an aging grandparent and becomes an expert on dementia.)</p>

How can the content of lessons be enriched?

- creative handouts e.g. a test is a crossword, solve a mystery that a historian or geologist would face
- unusual, humorous, challenging assignments/homework e.g. find and interview a government leader, do a report on a famous world court case
- teacher lesson plans include twists and unusual approaches e.g. a student dresses and talks like Sir Edmund Hillary while standing on a chair that represents the top of Mount Everest
- interesting excursion follow-up activities e.g. design a ...

E-Learning Packages

E-Learning packages are first study guides that include a list of websites and other references related to the subject or topic and sub-topics of interest. The package may include copy and paste parts of sites, URLs, personal guiding comments, quick thoughts and ideas, musings, advice and suggestions from others. The list does not have to be organized when first created but can be merely a collection of found resources. After a good number of entries have been gathered, the information can be logically organized and then accessed at any time during the actual study, but mainly via the internet...

Student Personal Learning and Ideas Banks (see Appendices)

Students should be encouraged to start and keep their own library of ideas and information in a personal database outside of school. What is saved may be of interest later in life as a study, hobby, or base for a school project or study.

From Part 24 on the Future

Jobs of the Future for Gifted Students

Jobs of the future will not be the same as jobs today. There will be many new jobs and occupations from which gifted children can choose before they enter the workforce. But, at the same time, there is a nostalgic movement to return to old ways by using modern methods and materials e.g. a return to vinyl records. Jobs and careers will be available for the future and also ones will be...

Inventing New Services

The following list is based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. It begins at the physical level and then moves upward in complexity to the more aesthetic, spiritual, and esoteric. In each, there are opportunities for creating services for people who may want to casually or seriously experience a different level of interaction in the universe and also for those at different levels of actual need rather than want. The levels challenge and trigger thought about inventing new and interesting services.

What is a service? “action of helping or doing work for someone.”

Who needs services? men, women, children, elderly, disabled, teenagers, animals, deceased, workers, immigrants, migrants, homeless, mentally ill, injured, addicts, and many others in various positions, states, and conditions (also consider services to deal with Nature)

Physical Needs: air, food, water, clothing, shelter,...

Template for Finding Ideas for Inventions

People do not have to look far to find a lack, inefficiency, injustice, need or want. Imagination is often the source of many inventions. The powers of dreaming, wishing, observation, noticing are important. The science-fiction of today is often tomorrow's reality. Dreams can become reality.

This valuable system helps create new products. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can generate new services.

List **members** that belong to each category below *e.g.*...

From Part 25 on Working with Gifted Adults

Behaviors of Gifted Bosses

Circular Thinking (a spinning hula hoop of ideas on a swing)

This kind of thinking can drive some people crazy. Ideas are verbalized and then repeated over and over again at different times or occasions. It seems that the thought had never been discussed before and the idea is new and fresh each time. The same thing comes up time and again.

If you listen carefully, however, the ideas do change each time and may get better. It is simply a way of processing thoughts. It may also be that by hearing his/her own words the boss's thoughts become clearer. Add to them if you wish as your ideas will be more food for thought. Don't get upset because each time the idea is presented, you may learn something new. The boss is not insane, just a circular thinker. Desensitize already! Ideas are being constantly generated. Things are moving forward.

Expert/Specialist (knows everything about everything)

There are some people that read and learn about everything. Gifted bosses may have read more than most of the employees combined. It's okay. It saves you research time and adds greatly to your own wealth of knowledge, facts, procedures, trivia, understanding, details, and vicarious experiences. This gifted boss is probably not showing off but just has these tools and library

Part 26 has approx. 100 terms that every educator and parent should know regarding gifted education

Part 27 Appendices are lists and lists of valuable ideas and triggers for thought and studies. There are also templates that can help students control their learning and thinking.

SAMPLE: Approx. 400 sources of learning and potential products of learning.

<u>A</u>	Audio -Video recordings	Bulletin board
Advertisements	Autobiography	Bumper Sticker
Advice Column	Axiom	Business Plan
Album		
Allegory	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>
Anagram	Baked goods	Cartoons
Anecdote	Ballet	Calendar
Animation	Banner	Calligraphy
Annotated bibliography	Batik	Campaign
Announcement	Beverage	Case history
Anthem	Bibliography	Case study
Art Gallery	Billboard	Catalog
Artifact Collecting	Book	Ceramics
Associations	Box	...and more
Atlas	Brochure	

"Research Topics" Bank (approx. 450 ideas. Make thoughts happen using these thought triggers.)

3-D Glasses	Addiction
9-1-1	Adoption
Abortion	Advertising
Abuse of the Elderly	Affirmative Action
Abused Women	Afghanistan
Academic Dishonesty	
Academic Freedom	(and more)
Acid Rain	

"World Problems to Solve" Bank (the broad topics presented keep studies relevant and modern)

BUSINESS - Abusive Marketing, Bankruptcy, Whistle blowing, , Job Opportunities, Unemployment, Subversive Advertising, Thwarted Career Goals, Unjustifiably Large Incomes, Work Environment...

CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS - Aliens and UFO's, Bermuda Triangle, Conspiracy Theories

EDUCATION - Academic Pressure, Cheating, Dropouts, Competency Tests, Lack Of Job Opportunities, Parent Education, Sex education In Schools...

ENVIRONMENT - Acid Rain, Alternate Energy Sources, Climate Change

ETHICS AND MORALITY - Abortion, Assisted Suicide, Beginning Of Life Issues, Birth Control, Euthanasia, Gender Identity, Genetic Engineering, Human Cloning,...

"Qualities to Develop in People" Bank

(approx. 300)

“All for One and One for All”

Attitude
A Will to Succeed
Accomplishment
Accountability
Accuracy
Achievement

Advancement
Adventure
Affection
Agreement
Altruism
Appreciation
Assertiveness
Attitude
Authority
...and more

"Personal Interests and Speech Topics" Bank (187 topics)

(these can serve as topics for one-minute lectures to develop communication skills)

1. Birds that visit your backyard at home
2. Your favorite time of day or week
3. Nice birthday presents you would like to get
4. What you could do without television or video
5. How to understand a weather map
6. Making funny ice cubes with prizes inside

Independent Studies Planning Form (template that all students can use)

Topic to be Studied:

Why I Am Interested in this Topic: (go beyond a superficial liking)

What I Want to Achieve in This Study: (do it as a personally meaningful and fulfilling experience)

Topic Web (brainstorm: add to this at any time):

Sources of Information I Have (names of people, places, things I know or have found):

....and more

E-Learning Packages are highly motivating and test abilities of students to learn in exciting, new ways.

**E-Learning Topic: Alternatives to War
Skills to Develop**

- Debating
- Questioning
- Speaking
- Analyzing what is said by others
- Researching the causes of wars
- Summarizing findings
- Note-taking
- Leadership

Related Study Topics

- Why are humans so interested in destruction?
- Effects of war on humans, wildlife, environment, planet
- What can be done to prevent wars?
- What leaders of the future should know about war

Timeline of wars (Is the number of wars being reduced?)