Global Principles for Professional Learning in Gifted Education

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children

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World Council for Gifted and Talented Children

Dear Members of the WCGTC,

How happy I am to share the Global Principles for Professional Learning in Gifted Education. This document can provide guidance when decisions concerning education are being considered by local, regional, state/provincial, or national entities. The ten principles in this document can assist in the development of professional learning programs in gifted education as the name of the document highlights. These principles can provide guidance for educators, policymakers, and professional learning specialists, as well as for those making decisions for teacher preparation programs in various localities and countries across the globe.

The Global Principles for Professional Learning in Gifted Education were developed collaboratively by a committee of scholars and practitioners selected from applicants who were members of the WCGTC. Each member of the committee offered insight and ideas from their individual perspectives. Of course, it was important to have broad representation in order to produce a document that would be valuable in providing guidance for decision-makers in settings around the globe.

I thank Dr. Norma Hafenstein for her leadership in this initiative of the WCGTC. Her work throughout the two-year process was supported by Joi Lin and Kayla Steffins. A heartfelt thank you extends to each member of the committee who volunteered to be engaged in the work to develop the principles. Thanks also go to the members of the writing team who put the final document together – Dr. Rosemary Cathcart, Dr. Shelagh Gallagher, Dr. Norma Hafenstein, Dr. Michelle Ronksley-Pavia, Dr. Bruce Shore, and Dr. Margaret Sutherland.

Please share this document with educators, policymakers, professional learning providers, and leaders in teacher preparation programs who are interested in preparing all teachers to appropriately educate gifted and talented children across the globe. Our world will be a better place as we develop children and young people's talents and potential to the highest levels.

Sincerely,

Julia Link Roberts, EdD
President of the WCGTC (2017-2021)
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Introduction

The new decade has provided stark reminders of the need for the world's most able minds to be well-educated. The global pandemic, a warming planet, and shifting demographics present unprecedented, complex problems that require insight, expertise, creativity, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Even in the absence of dire crises, societal progress is fueled by the innovation and insight of its most gifted citizens. We all benefit as their curiosity and vision move science, art, and culture forward.

Although we all rely on the contributions of gifted and talented adults, educators worldwide receive little information about how to educate gifted and talented children. The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children *Global Principles for Professional Learning in Gifted Education* are intended to help remedy this pervasive gap in educator preparation by guiding policy and practice in professional learning about gifted education.

Some might question whether educators need specific instruction about gifted students, assuming that these children will be fine on their own. However, this is a misconception, one of several that teachers tend to hold about gifted students in the absence of professional learning (Alencar et al., 2002). In fact, dozens of research studies provide evidence that gifted students have unique learning needs. In addition to their need for advanced content, they are more inclined to seek information, create new ideas, and engage in sophisticated thinking (S. Gallagher, 2013; Sak, 2004). Without appropriately challenging instruction, gifted students can become disenchanted and disengaged from formal education (Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003; Preckel et al., 2010). Research also shows that, in the absence of professional preparation, educators lack the knowledge needed to accurately identify gifted students for acceleration or specialized gifted programs; and they do not learn how to use differentiation strategies that increase the depth and complexity of their instruction (Van Tassel-Baska et al., 2021).

The most devastating loss is among gifted students whose advanced abilities are masked by poverty, disability, or cultural biases. Although they might arrive at school eager to learn, these gifted students are frequently overlooked and undereducated, representing a tragic waste of personal potential and human capital. Finding these students while they are young and fulfilling their desire to learn both supports social justice and ultimately contributes to healthy economies.

At the most basic level, providing universal educator preparation in gifted education helps fulfill every child's right to learn something new every day. Sometimes a gifted child's needs can be met in the regular classroom by a teacher who understands how to add challenge through differentiation of curriculum and instruction. Indeed, all children benefit when classroom teachers receive this preparation in high-end learning. Other gifted students require more intensive intervention in the form of acceleration or specialized programs (Assouline et al., 2014). Educators leading these efforts need more intensive and advanced preparation. The need for professional learning in gifted education is not restricted to teachers. For example, guidance counselors, school psychologists, and other support personnel need to know how to provide gifted and talented students with college and career planning or social-emotional support, and school administrators need to understand how to monitor program effectiveness.

The following principles outline an infrastructure for preparing all educators to support gifted children in their classrooms across the world, regardless of their educational setting. We welcome collaboration with colleagues across education globally to implement these principles and help ensure that all students receive the education they deserve.

Global Principles for Professional Learning in Gifted Education

1. **Tiered Content.** Comprehensive professional learning programs recognize that all educators work with gifted students, so all educators need some degree of professional preparation to support the education and growth of gifted children, although the amount and type of content may vary according to each educator's role.

2. **Evidence-Based.** A quality professional learning program is based on best-practice and research, including the ways in which gifted students are uniquely different from other students as a core rationale for differentiated services.

3. **Holistic.** Professional learning in gifted education should address the whole child, including academic, social, and emotional needs.

4. **Broad.** A thorough professional learning program includes information about different levels of giftedness, different forms of giftedness, varied methods of identification, different program models, and options for modifying curriculum and instruction.

5. **Equitable.** Professional learning programs in gifted education should address the needs of students from different racial, cultural, ethnic and indigenous groups, genders, and sexual orientations. Recruiting and retaining educators from representative diverse backgrounds, should be a priority.

6. **Comprehensive.** Many school personnel affect the lives of gifted children, directly or indirectly. A plan for professional learning in gifted education must therefore include provisions for educating administrators, counselors, psychologists, special educators, and others about the needs of gifted students.

7. **Integral.** Professional learning should present gifted education in the context of an entire school program, emphasizing that gifted students are the responsibility of the whole school community and not just the educators charged with specific responsibilities for serving gifted students.

8. **Ongoing.** A professional learning plan in gifted education should provide ongoing opportunities to refine and extend existing knowledge and skills through in-service programs and other professional learning experiences throughout a career.

9. **Sustainable.** Professional learning in gifted education should be built into educational policy of the state, region, province and/or country. Programs should be monitored regularly, and accountability systems should be in place. Collaboration between all stakeholders–policymakers, school authorities, community members, higher education faculty, and others–is actively encouraged.

10. **Empowering.** Professional learning in gifted education should prepare educators to be effective supporters, promoting gifted students and the services they require.

Global Principles

Global Principle 1: Tiered Content.

Comprehensive professional learning programs recognize that all educators work with gifted students, so all educators need some degree of professional preparation to support the education and growth of gifted children, although the amount and type of content may vary according to each educator's role.

Every educator works with students who excel and who have the potential to learn faster or in further depth than other children their age. To this extent, every teacher needs some professional learning about gifted and talented students. However, a regular classroom teacher working with a broad range of students may not need the same depth or breadth of knowledge as a teacher working in a self-contained classroom of gifted students (Aulls & Ibrahim, 2012; Roberts & Inman, 2015; Tomlinson, et al., 2008). The context where teaching and learning occurs also impacts what professional knowledge and skills are most relevant for a particular teacher, for example, contrasting large, sparsely resourced, multilevel classes to well-provisioned, modern classrooms and schools (Clark & Shore, 2004). Designers of professional learning programs should consider tiers of different depth and complexity, which could take place in different settings, for instance:

- Short programs with minimal specialization offered by school districts, education ministries or departments, colleges, universities, either on-line, by correspondence, or in-person.
- In-service or other continuing professional education related to gifted learners, for educators who have already completed their initial preparation programs.
- Full-time or part-time education, usually at or in collaboration with institutions of higher education, beyond initial teacher preparation with embedded content in gifted education teaching subjects or other fields (e.g., counseling, psychology, special or inclusive education), or specializing specifically in gifted education.

The quantity and content of professional learning educators require to meet the needs of their gifted students will differ in each context above and will need local adaptation (Gubbins & Hayden, 2020). Program monitoring and efficacy research should accompany implementation of any professional learning plan (Johnsen & Clarenbach, 2019; Parker, 1996; Shore et al., 1991).

SAMPLE FRAMEWORK FOR A TIERED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PLAN

Tier 1: Sample content for all teachers, including regular classroom teachers, early childhood educators, art and other specialty teachers, Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCos), and school counselors in large school settings:

- Awareness that child development progresses differently for different children, and curriculum does not define upper limits for what is expected at a given age or stage. Gifted students, who are often not challenged by the regular curriculum even when they excel, require adjustments to their academic experiences to ensure they learn something new every day.
- The characteristics that qualify students for specialized gifted education programming, including how giftedness manifests differently in different populations, what might mask the manifestation of giftedness, and what social-emotional supports might be necessary.
- The basic classroom and school practices that can help gifted learners, for example, cluster grouping, higher-level questioning, offering above-level curriculum materials and assignments, and using available technology as a mechanism for differentiation.
- The conditions under which acceleration of different forms are advisable.

Tier 2: Sample content for teachers of enrichment programs, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) classes, school principals. All the Tier 1 information, and:

- Identifying elements in the common curriculum that are especially attractive to and valuable for extremely able learners, as well as how to find or create such curriculum. Methods of instruction that complement advanced curriculum.
- When and how to access subject-matter specialists to assist in curriculum planning or to serve as a mentor to a student with an interest in a subject that extends beyond the school curriculum.
- The social-emotional and counseling needs of advanced students
- Strategies that are effective when discussing gifted education with others, including parents, school leadership, and local education authorities .

Tier 3: Sample content for educators who work exclusively with gifted students including program coordinators, full-time enrichment specialists serving many grade levels or schools, in self-contained classrooms, or specialized schools. All information from Tiers 1 and 2, and:

- Detailed study of the theoretical and research literature on giftedness, talent, creativity, including how they are defined in different cultural contexts.
- Gifted-education program models and program evaluation methods.
- The educational implications of advanced development and methods of altering the pace, depth, and/or complexity of curriculum and instruction for advanced learning, including self-regulated learning and how experts work creatively.
- Specialized knowledge and strategies to support the social-emotional needs and intensities of gifted learners.
- How to conduct action-research and evaluate the effectiveness of local practices.
- Advanced content knowledge relative to the grade level they teach.

Global Principle 2: Evidence-Based.

A quality professional learning program is based on best-practice and research, including the ways in which gifted students are uniquely different from other students as a core rationale for differentiated services.

Evidence-based professional practice is the gold standard in every field. In the case of gifted education an evidence-based professional learning program is based both on (a) research regarding the nature of gifted and talented students and best practice in the field, and (b) research regarding best practice in professional learning. Numerous classroom practices in gifted education have been shown to be effective and should be featured in teacher preparation for gifted learners (Little, 2017; Miller, 2009; Peters & Jolly, 2018).

Fewer studies address when and how to teach educators the dispositions and skills that are essential to gifted education (Reid & Horváthová, 2016). Most gifted teacher-education practices and standards arise from the consideration of expert panels. This provides a rationale rather than evidence, but a defensible start. The current evidence base supports the following observations:

- In anthologies of research on giftedness, talents, and creativity, none has more than one chapter on teacher-preparation research (e.g., Plucker & Callahan, 2020; Robinson et al., 2006).
- Some individual studies offer valuable steps for identifying competencies (e.g., van Gerven, 2021), experience, beliefs, or dispositions that enhance teaching of gifted learners.
- One study directly observed changes in teachers' classroom-practices and compared these to student reports of their classroom experiences. The largest teaching change was more student-led work (Hansen & Feldhusen, 1994). Results of another study suggested that while all forms of professional preparation provide some benefit, university training was most likely to impact teacher practice (Westberg & Daost, 2003).
- Some empirical research reports outcomes to changes in attitudes (Plunkett & Kronborg, 2011; Vreijs et al., 2017), improvement in equitable identification practices (Gallagher & Gallagher, 2013; Riley et al., 2017) and planning for curriculum compacting (Reis & Westberg, 1994).

Evidence-based practice in teacher preparation for gifted education is attainable, but the formal research base needs to grow. Perhaps a more productive way to foster building a solid evidence base for professional learning in gifted education would be to focus on accumulating a substantial archive of case studies of gifted learners, intervention-specific action-research reports, and comparisons of teaching practices and learner outcomes. Each practice would benefit from being contextualized regarding teacher background, instructional setting, the evidence base in general education, and uniqueness or adaptation to learners with different kinds of giftedness. Evidence-based learning that is culturally relevant makes a difference in prospective teachers' knowledge about teaching gifted students (Plunkett & Kronborg, 2021).

Global Principle 3: Holistic.

Professional learning in gifted education should address the whole child, including academic, social, and emotional needs.

All professional learning should focus on the notion that young people are unique and individual. When designing professional learning programs in gifted education, it is important to consider the diverse nature of these learners and what those differences mean for classrooms, learning, instructional strategies, and also the larger life of the classroom and school community. This will allow consideration of all aspects of school life that impact on the learner, including "life-wide and life-long" circumstances (Teschers, 2020, p. 77). A holistic view of gifted education considers all dimensions of child development.

- A whole-child perspective. A professional learning program should encourage teachers to think beyond a gifted student's outstanding cognitive abilities and include the student's affective needs. Although many gifted students are well adjusted, some face special social-emotional challenges that result from being gifted (Freeman, 2006). These include adjusting to cognitive, creative, or emotional intensity; social adjustment issues; perfectionism; or coping with real or perceived pressure to perform. Some students may be bright but immature socially and emotionally (Silverman, 2013) others are socially and emotionally advanced for their years. Some gifted students have additional exceptionalities, such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, or physical differences. All teachers need some level of information about gifted students' characteristics and social-emotional needs. Teachers also need to know that academic needs should not be ignored or deferred while meeting social-emotional needs; meeting the needs of the whole child requires attention to academic and social-emotional needs simultaneously (Cathcart, 2020).
- A whole-school approach. Gifted education should be integral to individual schools and to the larger school system, not an add-on or an afterthought. (see Tiered, Integral, Comprehensive).
- A whole-life view. Professional learning in gifted education would benefit from considering gifted learners in terms of their whole lives (Teschers, 2020).

Consider family background, culture, socio-economic status, skills, interests, and abilities, and long term and short-term support needs. It is beneficial to incorporate cultural norms and values alongside the wider school drivers to guide and shape gifted education in ways that value and celebrate all learners (e.g., girls, children from underrepresented cultural groups, underachievers, children with disabilities).

- A whole-community endeavor. An effective professional learning program will help educators consider how gifted education offers opportunities in and beyond school, including the home environment, the child's social world, the wider family and community, and how these interact and impact on education and gifted education in particular (see Comprehensive).

Professional learning in gifted education should blend academic, social, emotional, and cultural factors to ensure they come together in unique ways that develop, challenge, encourage and support gifted learners in the school context and across the lifespan.

Global Principle 4: Broad.

A thorough professional learning program includes information about different levels of giftedness, different forms of giftedness, varied methods of identification, different program models, and options for curriculum and instruction.

A common thread running through the principles is uniqueness of the learner. It is therefore no surprise that there is no single presentation of a gifted learner which fits neatly into the stereotype that many people hold (Matheis, et al, 2020). Giftedness manifests itself in different ways, in different places, in different degrees, at different times, and within or across subject domains. Some gifted children are high achievers, others have advanced potential but are not high achievers. This diversity requires that professional learning opportunities present a variety of perspectives, program structures, curriculum models, instructional practices, methods of social-emotional support, and identification procedures. Educators should be exposed to increasingly broad perspectives about numerous topics as their expertise increases (see Tiered). Among the core concepts to include are:

- Foundations and expressions of gifts and talents. Gifted students tend to share similar cognitive and personality characteristics (S. Gallagher, 2009); even so, giftedness is expressed in different ways (Subotnik et al., 2011).
- Cultural context. Different cultures may value different knowledge traits and skills. For instance, some cultures value social constructs and communal expression of ability over individual achievement. These cultural variations may result in different definitions of giftedness.
- Factors that mask giftedness or contribute to underachievement. Exceptional ability may be masked or inhibited by numerous barriers, including emotional problems, cultural bias, or accompanying exceptionalities (Gilar-Corbi et al., 2019; Siegle, 2018).
- Identification. Exclusive use of an IQ test as the sole method for identification is no longer recommended. Professional learning programs should stress a holistic view of the child and present the advantages and disadvantages of using different tools including achievement test scores, information from parents and teachers, behavioral checklists, and samples of student work as part of identification in addition to IQ scores. Using multiple identification tools should improve student access to programs, not create multiple barriers to programs.
- Models for differentiating curriculum, instruction, and assessment. A critical examination of the range of models that describe gifted students and gifted education so educators can construct their own evidence-based understanding of giftedness and how to serve gifted learners.
- Program structures. Different ways to integrate a gifted program into school offerings including cluster grouping, pull-out services, forms of acceleration, and individualized programs.

School administrators, counselors, and teachers should also understand the diversity of gifted learners, and how to respond to their needs by making necessary program provisions. Allowing staff time to discuss theoretical and practical issues related to gifted education will build a strong community of educators who are ready and able to respond to gifted learners whom they teach.

Global Principle 5: Equitable.

Professional learning programs in gifted education should address the needs of students from different racial, cultural, ethnic and indigenous groups, genders, and sexual orientations. Recruiting and retaining educators from representative diverse backgrounds, should be a priority.

Gifted students exist among all groups, cultures, indigenous groups, genders, sexual orientations, and regions of the world, and they all have a right to an appropriate education. Professional learning plays a pivotal role in promoting equitable student identification, and in ensuring diversity among the cadre of educators who work with gifted students. It is imperative that all gifted students are reflected among the teachers who educate them.

- Underrepresentation of gifted children according to gender, across diverse cultural groups, and income groups is a global problem that is well-researched and long known in gifted education (Bianco et al., 2011; Wallace & Erikson, 2006). Professional learning programs should include content about how giftedness may be expressed differently among different groups, how and why gifted students may mask their giftedness because of cultural expectations, and other reasons why giftedness may not be recognized (Henderson & Jarvis, 2016). Ensuring equitable representation of gifted students from all backgrounds is consistent with the aims of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relative to education (UNESCO, 2015).
- Retaining diverse gifted students in a gifted program is as important as identification. Professional learning should include discussion about how to modify curriculum and instruction to attract and engage these students (Novak et al., 2020).
- Professional learning programs should actively recruit teachers from diverse backgrounds for advanced preparation in gifted education. Underrepresentation of culturally diverse teachers in gifted education programs perpetuates stereotypes of gifted students (Morgan, 2019).

Every teacher who works with gifted students should understand how to provide all qualified students access to a gifted education program, how to provide educational opportunities that reflect a variety of perspectives, and how to provide access to social and emotional supports needed to stay in the program over time. One critical component of this goal is for teachers from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds to receive training in gifted education so gifted students can see them as intellectual and creative leaders in their schools. Increasing the diversity among students and teachers in gifted education is good for all students, because it increases appreciation for the fact that insight, creativity, and innovation occur among all the world's peoples.

Global Principle 6: Comprehensive.

Many school personnel affect the lives of gifted children, directly or indirectly. A plan for professional learning in gifted education must therefore include provisions for educating administrators, counselors, psychologists, special educators, and others about the needs of gifted students.

When at school, gifted children interact with many school personnel beyond their classroom; therefore, all school personnel who are directly or indirectly involved with gifted students should be educated and be aware of their needs. A comprehensive professional learning plan should incorporate a whole-school approach to teaching, learning, and supporting gifted students (Renzulli & Reis, 2014; Robinson & Campbell, 2010). A whole-school approach focuses on the responsibilities of all personnel in the school community, thus, ensuring that gifted students have opportunities to maximize their experiences at school.

- A whole-school community understanding, awareness, and knowledge about the unique needs of gifted students will provide an optimized school-wide learning environment for gifted students (see Holistic).
- School administrators are responsible for the success of all school programs, including the gifted education program. They should learn about different program models, and effective methods for evaluating the success of a gifted program, especially when the aims of the

program go beyond traditional school content (Callahan & Reis, 2004).

- Gifted students have unique social, emotional and well-being needs. All guidance counselors and school psychologists should understand these needs to support gifted students at school (Blaas, 2014; Silverman, 2012).
- As many as one in six gifted students has some form of learning difference in addition to their giftedness (Ronksley-Pavia, 2020; Silverman, 2012). It is particularly important for special educators to understand the intersection between advanced ability and special needs.

A whole-school approach to supporting gifted students should focus on the responsibilities of every member of the school community, regardless of whether the school personnel were directly or indirectly involved with gifted students.

Global Principle 7: Integral.

Professional learning should present gifted education in the context of an entire school program, emphasizing that gifted students are the responsibility of the whole school community and not just the educators charged with specific responsibilities for serving gifted students.

Often, services for gifted students are seen as separate from the general school program, leading to considerable misunderstanding both about gifted students and about the aims of gifted education (Alottey et al., 2020; Matheis et al., 2017). Classroom teachers report that the absence of knowledge about gifted education leaves them feeling unprepared serve gifted students (Antoun et al., 2020; Rowan & Townend, 2016). The absence of professional learning exacerbates separation of gifted and regular education and leads to misconceptions about how and when to accelerate students or put gifted students in specialized programs (Sanchez-Escobedo et al., 2020).

There are two ways to see that gifted education services are seen as integral in schools. First, present gifted education as a part of a continuum of services during professional learning. Even a self-contained program should be seen as contributing to the whole school environment. Encourage teachers to identify their role in the gifted program (e.g., regular classroom differentiation, making referrals, looking for opportunities to collaborate) and how the gifted program connects with their classrooms (see Tiered).

Second, an effective professional learning program should ensure that content about gifted education is integrated into professional learning opportunities in all content areas in which advanced programming can and should occur. As a part of offering a tiered program of professional learning, learning modules in gifted education would be useful in specialty areas, including:

- Special Education. Although some gifted students may also have a specific learning disability, ADHD, autism, or other exceptionalities, special education teachers are not likely to refer students to a gifted program (Bianco & Leech, 2010). Professional learning programs should embed units of study in gifted education to ensure that teachers look for both learning challenges and strengths.
- Career and Technical Education/Vocational Education and Training. Topics found in vocational paths are increasingly sophisticated, including finance, health science, and information technology. Many gifted students are attracted to these subjects (Gentry et al., 2007). Teachers specializing in these areas would benefit from knowing how and why to differentiate for gifted students.
- The Arts. Visual and performing arts, music, and creative writing teachers would benefit from knowing the characteristics of gifted students, many of whom pursue artistic interests (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008).

Evidence suggests that when teachers receive information about gifted students, their attitudes towards gifted students improve (Lassig, 2009) and they make more accurate program referrals to gifted programs (Elhoweris, 2008). A gifted program that is integral to the educational offerings of a school, district, agency, ministry, or region provides the surrounding community with evidence of a commitment to high standards, and benefits everyone by sharing resources and strategies that enhance learning for all students.

Global Principle 8: Ongoing.

A professional learning plan in gifted education should provide ongoing opportunities to refine and extend existing knowledge and skills through in-service programs and other professional learning experiences throughout a career.

Professional learning needs to be an ongoing part of every teacher's career, throughout the whole of that career, everywhere in the world (Education International & UNESCO, 2019). This need applies to professional learning in gifted education as much as it does to other teaching areas. There is arguably a case for saying it is even more necessary in relation to gifted education wherever provision for gifted learners has historically been minimal or absent. An ongoing system professional learning should:

- Draw upon current and classic research in the field. Professional learning in gifted education needs to be well-informed and up to date with the research to provide teachers with guidance and support in developing provision for gifted learners (see Evidence-Based).
- Result in changed practice. Continuous recording, tailoring to teachers' needs, evaluation, and sharing of practice are crucial components in professional learning in gifted education because it ensures that professional learning remains fresh and encouraging for teachers, inspiring them to try new ideas and supporting them in finding satisfaction in their work with gifted learners (Wycoff et al., 2003).
- Align with other changes that impact on the classroom and the teacher's role within it. Technology is an obvious example, but there are also changes that can influence teaching in more subtle ways, including changing cultural attitudes (see Integral, Holistic).
- Provide goals and rewards. Ongoing learning in professional development should also be achievable. Teachers should be able to access quality professional learning in gifted education readily and appropriately as needed. Systems need to be in place at local, regional, and national levels to recognize expert providers of professional learning and to ensure schools can readily access such expertise. Schools need to provide good record-keeping of staff involvement in professional learning in gifted education to ensure all staff have ongoing opportunities to review and improve their knowledge and understanding in this field.

Local education authorities and schools should become aware of the range of opportunities for continuing professional learning in gifted education, which might include online or in-person university courses, workshops, conferences, visiting speakers, teacher clusters, memberships in regional, national, and international associations and/or access to online media and publications (Stevenson et al., 2016). Methods that encourage teachers agency around what they learn (Chandra-Handa, 2019) or to learn together in small groups around mutually agreed upon goals are both flexible and effective (Iskandar et al., 2020).

Finally, a commitment to ongoing professional learning in gifted education recognizes that individuals themselves change over time and are exposed to change in multiple ways. Ongoing professional learning should be a process which helps the individual recognize and come to terms with changes. Ongoing professional learning in gifted education should be engaging, challenging, and rewarding.

Global Principle 9: Sustainable.

Professional learning in gifted education should be built into educational policy of the state, region, province and/or country. Programs should be monitored regularly, and accountability systems should be in place. Collaboration between all stakeholders–policymakers, school authorities, community members, higher education faculty, and others–is actively encouraged.

Educational policies often reflect social policy, which "creates the rules and standards by which scarce resources are allocated to meet almost unlimited social needs" (J. Gallagher, 2002, p. 1). Including professional learning in gifted education in the policies of a state, region, province, or country sends a message that this preparation has value, and, by extension that gifted children are valued. Evidence suggests that educational policies have a direct impact on the availability of

opportunities for gifted students (Baker & Friedman-Nimz, 2004).

Professional learning in gifted education should be considered an integral component of larger policies about personnel preparation and gifted education. Establishing policies around professional development in gifted education will help ensure a systemic approach to developing and maintaining professional learning in gifted education. Sample policy provisions would establish:

- Clear professional learning requirements for all educational personnel who have contact with gifted students from pre-service education through advanced degrees (see Tiered, Comprehensive)
- Standards and goals for professional learning designed by qualified personnel within the appropriate region, state department, or ministry, along with a plan for regular updates to ensure that standards and goals are based on evidence-based best practice (Kim & Gentry, 2008; also see Evidence-Based), and help ensure that educators receive information about special populations of gifted students (Peters et al., 2019; Roberts et al., 2015)
- A means of monitoring and evaluating professional learning opportunities to ensure programs are up to date.
- Tangible support for professional development programs, including funding.

If professional learning in gifted education is to become an enduring feature of educational policy, then it must be closely woven into those components of larger school policies that reflect educational values. Achieving enduring professional learning in gifted education requires deliberate thought and planning at each level of the education system.

Global Principle 10: Empowering.

Professional learning in gifted education should prepare educators to be effective supporters, promoting gifted students and the services they require.

Gifted students—especially disadvantaged or other hard-to-find gifted students—benefit from having a champion (Robinson & Moon, 2003). One outcome of implementing Global Principles 1-9 should be that gifted students have the support of not just one, but numerous educators who feel empowered to work on their behalf at different levels of any educational authority. The presence of a champion for gifted education in a school has multiple benefits, including more equitable and accurate identification.

Empowered educators successfully engage with others to create support systems for a specific group who have unmet needs. To become empowered supporters of gifted students, educational personnel must have the following knowledge, skills, and tools incorporated at some point in their professional learning:

- Access to evidence-based information about the unique characteristics of gifted students and rationale for altering educational practice on their behalf.
- Knowledge of which messages about gifted education persuade different audiences, including parents, colleagues, and educational agencies and organizations outside of gifted education (Jones & S. Gallagher, 2013).
- Communication skills, including communication through social media, to call for support for their gifted program specifically and for gifted education generally.
- Access and opportunity to participate in professional organizations for gifted education at the local, national, and international level. Many of these organization have advocacy tools to help deliver effective messages.
- For teachers seeking advanced knowledge or degrees (see Tiered), how to access or form leadership cadres who can work together to make coordinated efforts to advance gifted education by influencing educational, civic, or governmental entities (Maier, 1993).

Despite decades of effort, the notion that gifted students exist and have different educational needs receives very different reception country by country or even region by region. Gifted students continue to need adults who are willing and able to step forward and effect change in their school, region, state, or nation for the benefit of the children, and the entire world.

Call to Action

Every child deserves to learn something new at school every day; gifted children are no different from any other child in this respect. Gifted and talented children should learn from teachers who are prepared to deliver the appropriate curriculum, using the most effective strategies, to ensure this learning occurs. School should also be a place where gifted and talented children's social and emotional needs are understood and met. Gifted and talented children thrive when they are taught by teachers who understand the ways that their learning and their social and emotional needs differ from their peers of the same age and who know how to address those needs.

This document is intended as a tool to create positive change on behalf of gifted students locally, regionally, and globally. The principles can serve to urge educational leaders and policymakers to invest in teacher professional learning and gifted education. Policymakers should adopt policies that mandate the inclusion of gifted education in teacher education programs at national, regional, and local levels.

Institutions of higher education have a crucial role to play in developing and infusing high-quality, evidence-based professional learning in gifted education throughout their education programs. Institutions that take on this charge will fill a long-neglected gap in educator preparation and become a cornerstone in the effort to foster new scholarship, correct misconceptions, and build new opportunities for collaboration.

Educational leaders and organizations should invest in the education of gifted students by including gifted education in teacher education programs and in-service offerings.

Experts in both specialized gifted and talented education and general teacher education should collaborate to develop teacher standards that include gifted education in teacher education programs.

Gifted children, their families, teachers, fellow students, the broader community and the larger society benefit when gifted learners are identified, supported, and provided with education commensurate with their needs and potential. In gifted education, as in all education, concern must be focused on the whole child. We invite others to join our commitment to the education and well-being of every gifted and talented child.

HOW TO BEGIN

The 10 Global Principles are interconnected; even so, they are difficult to implement simultaneously. In fact, there is no ideal starting place; the starting point will depend on the nature of the conversation about gifted education in a specific location, and what guidelines for professional learning are already in place. Consider conducting a formal or informal needs assessment to see what ideas in this document will be well received or form a task force to develop a strategic plan. The most important first step is to start and keep going. The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children is here to help! Contact headquarters@world-gifted.org for more information.

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INTRODUCTION

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Global Principles for Professional Learning in Gifted Education

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Srinivasan Muthusamy has a background in engineering, education, arts, and English literature. After experiencing the performance and unique strengths of students, Srinivasan began studying gifted education. Muthusamy completed a Masters in gifted education at the National Research Centre on Gifted and Talented, UCONN, USA. Muthusamy is an ardent, lifelong student of studying how to foster gifts and talents. Muthusamy became founder and vice-principal of a residential school, worked as professor at the Staff Training Institute of the Salala Palace in Oman, and supports gifted students at the GEAR Innovative International School in Bangalore.

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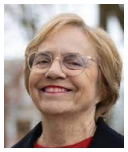
After teaching grades K-12 general education and gifted special education students, Connie Phelps now prepares gifted facilitators to teach diverse PK-12 gifted learners. Since 2004, she has served as the Gifted, Talented, and Creative Program Director at Emporia State University. An endowed professor recognized for impact on students, she has prepared several hundred gifted facilitators in Kansas for PK-12 endorsements and graduate degrees.



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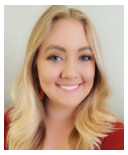

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as a board member of SoMe CAGT, the South-Metro Affiliate of Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented, and was appointed to serve on the Colorado Gifted Education State Advisory Committee. Kayla Steffens serves as a graduate assistant supporting the work of the committee chair, Dr. Norma Hafenstein.

Margaret Sutherland, Scotland

Margaret Sutherland is a professor at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. She is the Director of Partnerships, Communication and External Engagement and of the Scottish Network for Able Pupils. She has 40 years teaching experience in schools and higher education. She has written in the field of gifted education and is the author of a number of academic papers, chapters, and books on the subject. She serves on the editorial board of the Korean Journal of Educational Policy, Journal for the Education of the Gifted and Talent, formally known as the Turkish Journal of Giftedness and Education. She is a member of the editorial advisory board for the Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, the British Journal of Special Education and Support for Learning.

Eleonoor van Gerven, Netherlands

Eleonoor van Gerven is director of Slim! Educatief, a private teacher education institute in The Netherlands. She specialized in teacher education, gifted education, and the systemic change- and solution-focused approach. She developed the competency matrix for specialists in gifted education and a framework for assessing teacher competencies in gifted education. She developed the post-graduate courses Specialist in Gifted Education and the Specialist in Educating Twice Exceptional Learners, which are both accredited by the Dutch Society for Higher Education. Eleonoor van Gerven is the current chair of the Educational Insights Group.

Mantak Yuen, Hong Kong

Mantak Yuen, PhD, is Associate Professor and Director of the Laboratory and Program in Creativity and Talent Development, Centre for Advancement in Inclusive and Special Education, Faculty of Education, the University of Hong Kong. Yuen is the leader of the Master of Education program in Gifted Education and Talent Development. He served as the Director of the Doctor of Education Program (2015-2019).

Rachel Zorman, Israel

Rachel Zorman has been the executive director of the Szold Institute since 2008. The institute enhances Israeli education and social services via research, evaluation and implementing training and innovative intervention programs. Zorman received her PhD in special education from Columbia University, NY.

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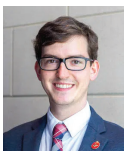

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