

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

**Report by Michele Juratowitch**

## **2003 Churchill Fellowship**

**To study counselling techniques and intervention strategies appropriate to meet the needs of gifted children, adolescents and parents.**

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Signed *Michele Juratowitch*

Dated 26.9.04

**“He was a very precocious child, and I think that his battle was with the combination of being intellectually precocious but also rather bloody-minded from the point of view that he wasn’t going to toe the line ... and so he was battling with his peers who thought he was probably rather tiresome and looking down on them, because he probably was brighter, and his school masters who were cross that he wasn’t doing the work that he didn’t want to do and therefore not performing overall in a very satisfactory manner.”**

*Celia Sandys  
Winston Churchill’s granddaughter<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Sandys, Celia (2003). PBS/TWI Carlton “*Churchill*” Warner Brothers DVD, Producers: Alastair Waddington, A. & Bide, P.; Director: Carter, L. TWI/Carlton Television.

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## INTRODUCTION

A 2003 Churchill Fellowship provided an opportunity for me to visit the UK and the USA to study counselling techniques and intervention strategies appropriate to meet the needs of gifted children, adolescents and parents. I was able to attend conferences, consult with a wide range of professionals and leading researchers, observe programs, explore resources and undertake courses.

Specific areas of study included:

- the psychosocial needs of the gifted
- effective counselling models, skills, techniques and intervention strategies
- initiatives and programs which meet intellectual and affective needs
- ways in which twice-exceptional students and families can be supported
- opportunities for sharing knowledge with parents and other professionals.

The time I spent in England and America was extraordinary and I gained significant knowledge and experience. I would particularly like to acknowledge:

- The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia for providing the impetus and the financial assistance that enabled me to pursue my learning. Throughout the process of application, selection, preparation and travel, everyone associated with the Trust has been extremely helpful and supportive.
- St Peters Lutheran College and the Principal, Stephen Rudolph who supported and actively facilitated this opportunity.
- Professor Miraca Gross for her friendship, teaching, personal support and guidance in preparation for, and during the Churchill Fellowship.
- Professors Karen Rogers, Nicholas Colangelo, John Geake and Dr Laurie Croft for their warm welcome and generous sharing of knowledge, opportunities and resources.
- The Belin-Blank Centre team, especially Drs Dau-shen Ju and Megan Foley Nicpon who shared professional experience, expertise and insights.
- My family, Tim, Claire, Sophie, Matt, Ben and Ingrid who inspire, challenge and support my passion for the gifted.

Thank you.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**Project:** To study counselling techniques and intervention strategies appropriate to meet the needs of gifted children, adolescents and parents.

### Highlights:

- Professor Karen Rogers, University of St Thomas: comprehensive educational plans for gifted children, and the related research.
- Joel Anderson and Joan Brinkman, St Louis Park Senior High School: developmentally appropriate affective education and group counselling.
- Henry & Jocelyn Wallace National Research Symposium on Talent Development: the latest research presented by gifted education leaders.
- The Belin-Blank Centre, University of Iowa: Professor Nicholas Colangelo, Drs. Susan Assouline, Laurie Croft, Dau-shen Ju, Megan Foley Nicpon, counselling and intervention strategies, student programs, resources.

### Conclusions:

- Counsellors and psychologists must be educated about the psychosocial and counselling needs of the gifted at pre-service and in-service level.
- A multidisciplinary professional body could share knowledge and perspectives of the gifted to develop understanding of their specific needs.
- School and Holiday Programs provide excellent opportunities for meeting gifted students' social, emotional, intellectual and educational needs.
- Parent education, support and advocacy skill development has a positive impact for individual children as well as on schools' educational provision.
- Philanthropy significantly benefits disadvantaged gifted students.

### Dissemination and Implementation:

- Develop a series of presentations to deliver to gifted associations, parent groups, counsellors, teachers, other professional groups.
- Incorporate information into lectures I present to teachers enrolled in the Certificate of Gifted Education course at the University of NSW.
- Utilise multidisciplinary professional networks to promote a gifted focus.
- Explore opportunities to establish affective groups and holiday programs.
- Develop parent support groups using the SENG Parent Group Model.
- Investigate opportunities and distribute information regarding financial support programs available for disadvantaged gifted students.

## **PROGRAMME**

**Oxford, U.K.**

**8<sup>th</sup> May – 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2004**

Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University

Blenheim Palace

**Minneapolis-St Paul, Minnesota, U.S.A.**

**13<sup>th</sup> May – 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2004**

University of St Thomas, Minneapolis and St Paul

St Louis Park Senior High School, Minneapolis

Interviews with Psychologists and Psychiatrist working with gifted children, adults

**Iowa City, Iowa, U.S.A.**

**23<sup>rd</sup> May – 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2004**

Henry & Jocelyn Wallace National Research Symposium on Talent Development

The Connie Belin and Jacqueline N. Blank International Centre for Gifted Education and Talent Development, University of Iowa

Courses undertaken at the Belin-Blank Centre:

- Creativity: Issues and Applications in Gifted Education
- Career Counselling: Values, Interests and Personality (VIP)
- Belin-Blank Fellowship Program for Teacher Training in Gifted Education

**Washington, D.C., U.S.A.**

**5<sup>th</sup> July – 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2004**

National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC)

Churchill and the Great Republic Exhibition, Library of Congress

**Arlington, Virginia, U.S.A.**

**9<sup>th</sup> July – 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2004**

Training Program: Establishing SENG-Model Parent Support Groups

SENG (Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted) Conference

**New York, NY, U.S.A.**

**12<sup>th</sup> July – 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2004**

The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship

Goldman-Sachs Foundation

## **COUNSELLING AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

The 2001 Senate References Committee Report “The Education of Gifted Children” outlined widespread concern within the community regarding the inadequacy of provision for gifted students in Australian education systems. Numerous submissions to the enquiry detailed the specific educational needs of gifted children and the differentiated provisions required in order for gifted students to achieve equity through the opportunity to achieve relative to their potential.<sup>2</sup> As a result of this report, increasing awareness and advocacy by parents, educators, researchers and academics, schools and universities are beginning to focus upon the educational needs of the gifted. Teacher education, particularly through the courses conducted by Professor Miraca Gross through the Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Centre (GERRIC) at the University of New South Wales, is resulting in a variety of educational provision for the gifted in some schools. The emerging trend is positive, but falls short of the need for all schools to identify and provide appropriate, differentiated curriculum and comprehensive support structures for gifted students.

In addition to the need for appropriate educational provision, gifted students require access to support and counselling from adults and professionals who have an understanding of their specific social, emotional and psychological needs.

School Counsellors and a range of professionals within the community may be consulted about concerns but usually have received no training related to the specific needs of the gifted. As a result, most professionals in a position to provide counselling have limited knowledge and understanding of the issues and lack the diagnostic and intervention skills needed to meet the needs of the gifted population. Families facing challenges related to disability, ethnicity, poverty and rural isolation are particularly disadvantaged by limited professional support.

Few Australian tertiary institutions offer courses related to giftedness, although UNSW now has a Gifted Education subject as part of the core requirement in pre-service teacher education. Advanced Psychology programmes may explore the psychometric assessment procedures for gifted children, but most Australian tertiary institutions involved in the education of Counsellors, Psychologists, Social Workers and Medical Practitioners do not provide course content designed to develop an understanding of the needs of the gifted.

With extremely limited counselling services available in Australia to meet the needs of the gifted, especially within schools, the 2003 Churchill Fellowship provided me an opportunity to learn from researchers, academics and practitioners who generously shared their knowledge, experience, expertise and resources. The following notes provide an overview of the knowledge gained during the Fellowship. I welcome opportunities to share this information in more detail with parents, schools and any professionals who work with the gifted.

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<sup>2</sup> Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee “The Education of Gifted Children”, 2001, Commonwealth of Australia

**Overview:**

There is controversy about the psychosocial adjustment and level of support need within the gifted population. The debate permeates research, conference presentations and discussions among Counsellors. There appears to be an important balance between identifying and meeting real needs without pathologising the gifted population. This debate was a persistent theme during my time in the US and is illustrated in two recent and significant publications.

In the NAGC report “The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children”, the authors concluded “There is no evidence that gifted children or youth – as a group – are inherently any more vulnerable or flawed in adjustment than any other group.”<sup>3</sup>

Colangelo, in “Handbook of Gifted Education”, presents another perspective:

“...giftedness brings with it an array of intrapersonal and interpersonal issues that are unique to their “giftedness.” Gifted students by their very advanced cognitive abilities and intensity of feelings deal with issues about self and others in ways that are different from those of the general population and therefore require specialized understanding.”<sup>4</sup>

Within an energetic climate of healthy debate, there is, however, consensus on a number of topics. There is agreement that the gifted are different and that this difference influences their experience of developmental tasks and stressors. Frustrations, underachievement, difficulties and resultant conflicts related to a lack of educational provision are widely acknowledged. There is general acceptance that increased levels of giftedness and issues related to being twice-exceptional can have a detrimental effect upon achievement and adjustment if intellectual and psychosocial needs are not met. Importantly, the position most strongly supported is that gifted students require differentiated educational provision and support services.

**Counselling:**

Counselling approaches which are differentiated for the gifted are resulting in positive psychosocial adjustment and achievement levels. It was clear that Counsellors with an understanding of giftedness are in a pivotal role and able to work with gifted students, their parents, teachers, school administrators and community professionals from a range of disciplines in order to effect appropriate interventions and positive outcomes. Counsellors who have an awareness of the issues are providing pro-active, preventative and developmentally appropriate counselling for individuals, families and groups as well as responding to specific stressors and concerns. The gifted can experience difficulties related to isolation, identity formation, sensitivity, intensity, anxiety, perfectionism, depression, multipotentiality, boredom and underachievement. Developmental issues related to transitions, friendships, career decision making and independence require a differentiated response for gifted students.

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<sup>3</sup> Neihart, M., Reis, S., Robinson, N. & Moon, S. (2003). *The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children: What Do We Know?* Waco: Prufrock Press, National Association of Gifted Children.

<sup>4</sup> Colangelo, N., Counselling Gifted Children in Colangelo, N. & Davis, G. (Eds.). (2003). *Handbook of Gifted Education*, Boston: Allyn & Bacon.



Differentiated counselling services are being offered within schools, as a part of holiday programs, through University-based clinics in centres for the gifted and by private practitioners. The location of the service doesn't seem to matter; the knowledge, focus, expertise and effectiveness of the individuals and the programs they offer are critical factors. Parents are travelling considerable distances to access appropriate assessment and counselling services.

The Belin-Blank Centre provides courses and supervised practicums in assessment, counselling and career counselling for the gifted. The NAGC, through the website, [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org) provides a list of guiding principles, minimum and exemplary standards in Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Social-Emotional Guidance and Counselling. A list of books I found particularly useful in relation to counselling the gifted will be provided at the end of this report.

### **School Counsellors:**

St Louis Park Senior High School provides an excellent example of a school-based Counsellor for the gifted. Joel Anderson and Joan Brinkman have each held the role of Advisor/Counsellor who is designated to work specifically with gifted students from Years 7 – 12. Both valued the continuity of contact with students across their high school years and had developed a range of resources and intervention services, including a developmentally appropriate affective education program, student retreat, pro-active group counselling, educational planning and advocacy, facilitation of mentorship programs, career counselling, supported students' college admissions, parent education and liaison. Affective education and group counselling programs anticipated and addressed most developmental stressors, but the relationships established with students through these programs facilitated student access when difficulties were encountered.

### **Career Counselling:**

The Career Counselling: Values, Interests and Personality (VIP) course and practicum undertaken at the Belin-Blank Centre differentiated Career Counselling for gifted students using group and individual counselling approaches. Students who were enrolled in a residential holiday program at the Centre completed a number of questionnaires and inventories before joining groups where Counsellors combined education, group activities, discussion and guidance to facilitate the career decision-making process. Students were then offered individual counselling to further explore the issues related to career choices. Values, interests and personality factors, when integrated, allow gifted students to consider a range of issues in order to make informed and congruent decisions.

Dr Megan Foley Nicpon shared her expertise in this area as well as her experience when working with Professor Barbara Kerr at Arizona State University. A career development program was developed by Barbara Kerr for at-risk Native American girls. Issues related to ethnicity, poverty, rural isolation and gender were addressed through an intensive intervention program that guided career development process. Career Counsellors who develop sensitivity to the influence of values, family expectations, cultural factors, gender issues, developmental level and multipotentiality are best able to support disadvantaged gifted students. Differentiated approaches are required to heighten aspirations and achieve career goals consistent with abilities and values.

### **Counsellors' Role in Educational Advocacy:**

Counsellors are frequently involved in advocacy and can assist gifted students to gain access to appropriate educational provision. The Iowa Acceleration Scale was developed at the Belin-Blank Centre as an administrative tool to help educators make a decision about the suitability of accelerating gifted students and facilitates consensus through the process undertaken. The Iowa Acceleration Scale <sup>5</sup> provides an important resource for Counsellors when considering acceleration as an option for a student and when advocating for gifted students' educational needs. Extensive research supports acceleration as an effective way of meeting gifted students' academic and social needs.

Professor Karen Rogers detailed the Educational Plans she developed for gifted students, using a comprehensive range of psychometric tests, inventories and scales. The results of her research investigating the efficacy of the Educational Plans were presented at the Wallace Symposium.<sup>6</sup> Her book, "Re-Forming Gifted Education" demonstrates how matching a child's cognitive abilities, interests, behavioural characteristics, learning strengths and preferences to an educational program promotes optimal learning experiences.<sup>7</sup> It is an exceptional resource for Counsellors and parents who are looking for ways in which to advocate for modifications to educational programs.

Dr Susan Assouline, Associate Director at the Belin-Blank Centre, through her research and experience as a School Psychologist and Director of the Counselling Clinic at the Centre believes that School Counsellors have a critical role to play in bridging the divide that often exists between schools and the parents of gifted students. By providing information about giftedness to parents and schools, teaching parents advocacy skills, acting as an advocate for students and providing individual counselling when required, School Counsellors can facilitate a more positive relationship between parents and schools in order to benefit students.

Jane Clarenbach, Director of Public Education and Affiliate Relations at the NAGC explored advocacy strategies at the local and federal level. The need to collect data that demonstrates the need for, and the effectiveness of initiatives and programs was emphasized. Federal funding initiatives are targeted for specific populations and designed to effect specific outcomes. It is important for organizations which support the gifted to be strategic when lobbying the government and to supply information that details numbers involved and the research to support the proposed initiative. Through a website, journals, newsletters, magazines, brochures, book publications and special divisions, the NAGC has strongly advocated for differentiated educational provision and specialist support services for the gifted. The Socio-Emotional Guidance and Counselling Division of the NAGC provides a range of useful resources.

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<sup>5</sup> Assouline, S., Colangelo, N., Lupkowski-Shoplik, A. & Lipscomb, J. (1998). *Iowa Acceleration Scale* Scottsdale: Gifted Psychology Press, Inc.

<sup>6</sup> Rogers, K., (2004). *The Impact of Education Plans on Gifted Children's Families and School Systems*, Presented at the Henry & Jocelyn Wallace National Research Symposium on Talent Development, University of Iowa.

<sup>7</sup> Rogers, K., (2002). *Re-Forming Gifted Education*, Scottsdale: Great Potential Press, Inc.

**Parent Education:**

Parents often feel isolated and uncertain about how to parent in order to meet their child's emotional, developmental and educational needs. Conflicts between parents and schools are common as parents become frustrated at the lack of educational provision for their gifted child. Parent groups can provide opportunities for parents to share experiences and gain support. The SENG Model Parent Groups<sup>8</sup> enable parents to discuss concerns and learn effective advocacy strategies within a supportive context. I undertook the SENG Model Training in order to establish Parent Groups using this approach.

The SENG Conference was well attended by parents and children who attended the concurrent holiday program for gifted children conducted as part of the Conference. A range of resources was available and parents enthusiastically participated in all aspects of the Conference to gain valuable insights and skills.

The Davidson Institute has been creative in establishing on-line resources to provide education for parents who are geographically distant from the Institute and each other. A selection of journal articles and "Tip Sheets for Parents" are provided on the website [www.davidsoninstitute.org](http://www.davidsoninstitute.org) and invited guests provide on-line seminars for the parents of gifted students who are supported by the Davidson Institute.

**Student Programs:**

A range of holiday and academic-year programs are offered for gifted children and adolescents. These are frequently provided by university or regional centres and are attended on a day-camp or residential basis, depending upon the age of the student and the type of program. Holiday programs provide an excellent opportunity for gifted students to meet other students of similar ability and interests, to engage in advanced, fast-paced courses that are academically rigorous and to explore options for tertiary study and career directions. Students may be identified through broad Talent Searches conducted by the University or they may meet other selection criteria established by the program.

The Belin-Blank Exceptional Student Talent Search uses above-level testing to identify gifted students and conducts Summer Programs which have had over 12,000 gifted students from grades 2 – 12 attend the following programs<sup>9</sup>:

**Elementary Students:**

- Challenges for Elementary School Students (CHESS)

**Middle School Students:**

- Junior Scholars Academy
- Blank Summer Institute for the Arts and Sciences \*
- Iowa Governor's Institute for the Gifted and Talented \*
- Iowa Talent Project \*

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<sup>8</sup> Webb, J. & DeVries, A. (1998). *Gifted Parent Groups: The SENG Model Training Manual*. Scottsdale: Gifted Psychology Press, Inc.

<sup>9</sup> Belin-Blank International Centre for Gifted Education and Talent Development brochure.

Secondary Students:

- National Scholars Academy
- Academy for Engineering Sciences
- Wallace Summer Institute for Rural Scholars \*
- Asian and Pacific Studies Institute \*
- Environmental Health Sciences Institute for Rural Youth \*
- Foreign Language Summer Institute \*

Academic-Year Programs (grades 2 – 9):

- Weekend Institute for Gifted Students
- Challenge Math

\* designates the scholarship programs which provide financial assistance for students enrolled in the programs.

The website [www.uiowa.edu/~belinctr](http://www.uiowa.edu/~belinctr) provides more detail of these programs.

It was exciting for me to observe the students enrolled in the programs co-ordinated by Jan Warren and Cathy Blando. Students were intellectually engaged, academically challenged, immersed in a subject they were passionate about, learning advanced material (often tertiary level), enjoying stimulating activities and absorbing new information rapidly without the frustration of repetition and delay. In conjunction with the cognitive experience, there were socio-affective benefits. Students found others of 'like-mind', they shared interests and humour, they experienced a sense of belonging, they were affirmed by true peers and they developed enduring friendships.

The residential program students experienced community living and engaged in a variety of social activities that were arranged after classes. This prepared students for the transition to University and living in residential colleges and was of particular benefit to rural students. Students often returned because of the valuable academic and social experience and shared comments such as:

“This is the sixth program I’ve attended – I just love it soooo much!”

“These courses are what keeps me going through the year – I just hang out for the next Summer School.”

“Learning Arabic this week was so cool. I want to work in International Relations and what I learnt about language and culture is great.”

“Collecting and testing water samples was fun and now I can do that on our farm when I go home.”

Dr Michelle Muratori, Senior Counsellor at the Centre for Talented Youth, Johns Hopkins University, shared details of the Day and Residential Summer Programs offered by CTY for gifted students and explained the role played by Counsellors in supporting students who attend the programs. Her work with exceptionally talented students provided insights into the counselling skills needed and the strategies used to support gifted students at different ability levels. Michelle outlined the specific needs of highly gifted students who have been radically accelerated and discussed the issues frequently raised by parents of radical accelerants. [www.cty.jhu.edu](http://www.cty.jhu.edu) provides details of the CTY Summer Programs.

### **Twice-Exceptional and Special Populations:**

The gifted population is as diverse as the general society, however students attending gifted programs in the US and Australia are still predominantly from the majority culture. Research and program initiatives to identify and involve gifted students from economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse groups are having an impact upon students attending programs. Similarly, gifted education centres, schools and counsellors are exploring ways in which they may identify and meet the needs of students who are twice-exceptional: gifted students with specific learning needs (learning disabilities, ADD or Asperger's Syndrome) or physically-disabled. Special populations may include: rural, creative, behaviourally challenging, underachieving or gay students. Gender specific issues are being discussed and affective programs in schools are trying to pre-empt developmental risk factors by addressing issues within group discussions, through counselling and via parent education programs.

Initiatives that I explored included:

The Excellence in Cities program for areas of urban deprivation in England focuses on students with special needs, including gifted students. Through a statutory provision, each school must appoint a G&T Co-ordinator who develops inclusive programs to identify and provide for up to 30% of the school population. Special care is taken to ensure diverse cultural groups are included in the program. This is accomplished by structuring the programs to accommodate specific cultural requirements. Teachers involved with the program must undertake additional training. This includes a unit to address the affective needs, pastoral care, vulnerabilities, study-skills, self-esteem and mentoring needs of gifted students.

Dr Megan Foley Nicpon at the Belin-Blank Centre, is undertaking research in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Education to develop procedures and guidelines for the discovery of gifted English Language Learners. Over sixty languages are spoken in Iowa and identification of gifted ELL poses challenges.

Iowa has a large rural population and the Belin-Blank Centre has developed programs to meet the needs of gifted rural students. The Summer Programs, especially the Environmental Health Sciences Institute for Rural Youth and Wallace Summer Institute for Rural Scholars provide fee-assisted, residential program opportunities that specifically focus upon the interests and needs of students from rural communities.

The Iowa Online Advanced Placement Academy, funded by a federal grant to the Belin-Blank Centre, "offers every Iowa high school student attending an accredited school the opportunity to take an AP course over the Iowa Communications Network or via Apex Web-based courses."<sup>10</sup> While not designed exclusively for rural students, it does enable rural students who attend small schools to access a wide range of advanced courses. Research by Dr Clar Baldus demonstrated that trained teachers acting as mentors have been critical to the high course completion rate and the success of the program.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Belin-Blank International Centre for Gifted Education and Talent Development brochure.

<sup>11</sup> Baldus, C., (2004) *Iowa Online AP Academy*, Presented at the Henry & Jocelyn Wallace National Research Symposium on Talent Development, University of Iowa.

Dr Susan Assouline is conducting research into gifted students with Asperger's Syndrome and presented some early findings at the Wallace Symposium.<sup>12</sup> This research will inform future educational and counselling interventions. Belin-Blank Centre psychoeducational assessments, outreach consultation and counselling services are providing comprehensive support for twice-exceptional students.

A Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education funded program is enabling Joe Cilek at the Belin-Blank Centre to research the needs of "at-risk" gifted students who attend Alternative Schools in Iowa. Although home, behavioural and attendance problems had been factors in students transferring to the alternative school, Cilek has found that "smaller classes, schedule flexibility, and a sense their teachers genuinely care reduce attendance issues and improves overall attitude towards school."<sup>13</sup>

The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship, Inc. (NFTE) is a youth development program designed to help low-income youth develop entrepreneurship skills. Through curriculum development, teacher accreditation, school and university courses, community programs and holiday camps, NFTE is targeting youth in culturally diverse, low-income communities. While the programs do not specifically target gifted students, the holiday camp for Middle School students I observed had attracted many gifted students, including several who were being home-schooled, and the program held great appeal for high-ability, independent students. Increased interest in attending college, greater job aspirations, improvements in school connectedness and independent reading scores were found in students after they attended NFTE programs.<sup>14</sup>

The main points to emerge from my exploration in these areas are:

- Counselling students in any of these special populations requires an understanding of the complex issues surrounding the inter-relationship between giftedness and the stressors and vulnerabilities associated with the other area of exceptionality.
- Although developing a sensitivity to the difficulties is important, adopting a strength-based approach within an educational or counselling context is critical if students are to achieve to their potential.
- Professional support services, where utilized, should share information regarding their respective specialities and how the individual student is impacted. This includes sharing information about giftedness with other professionals in order to ensure a comprehensive understanding and co-ordinated approach to supporting the individual.
- Bibliotherapy can be an effective intervention and counselling strategy for use with gifted students, and is especially appropriate in working with students who are twice-exceptional.

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<sup>12</sup> Assouline, S., (2004). *The Twice-exceptional Student: Causal, Correlational or Coincidental?* Presented at the Henry & Jocelyn Wallace National Research Symposium on Talent Development, University of Iowa.

<sup>13</sup> Cilek, J., (2004). *Research at the Belin-Blank Centre*, Presented at the Henry & Jocelyn Wallace National Research Symposium on Talent Development, University of Iowa.

<sup>14</sup> Nakkula, M., (2004). Reported in *NFTE Fast Facts Study Links Youth Entrepreneurship Programs To Keeping Students on Academic Track*.

### **Integration of Multidisciplinary Knowledge and Support Services:**

In order to optimise opportunities for gifted students, appropriate educational programming, counselling services and support services differentiated to meet their specific needs must be provided. To achieve this, it is critical that parents and professionals working with gifted youth develop relationships in which positive communication can result in the sharing of knowledge to benefit the child. Parent advocacy skills are an important component of this process and Counsellors can assist parents in developing effective advocacy skills.

Counsellors are in a position to act as a conduit for sharing information between students, parents, schools, and community professionals. When knowledgeable about issues related to giftedness, counsellors are able to contribute another dimension and promote a broader understanding of the needs of the child. When teachers, counsellors, psychologists, social workers, medical practitioners (especially paediatricians and child and adolescent psychiatrists), occupational therapists and speech pathologists develop an understanding of giftedness, it will be possible to provide more integrated and effective identification, diagnosis, treatment, programming and provision of services for the gifted.

Research conducted within the field of Neuroscience can inform a range of professional groups and Professor John Geake's research at Oxford Brookes University is increasing knowledge of the differences in brain function in the gifted. He advised that gifted students should take a short course in neuroscience in order to help them understand brain function, especially in relation to memory, metacognition, speed of processing and the ways in which emotions mediate neural traffic. His current research, which explores intellectual envy,<sup>15</sup> will be important to consider within a counselling context.

Dr James Webb outlined concerns related to common misdiagnoses and dual diagnoses of gifted children and adults and emphasised the need for psychologists, medical and mental health practitioners to have knowledge of giftedness. He identified characteristics and behaviour patterns that may lead to misdiagnoses and has developed a list of considerations in differentiating correct diagnoses from gifted behaviours.<sup>16</sup> His work as a psychologist, author, Great Potential Press publisher and through the SENG organization, conference and parent groups has enabled him to share information about the educational, social and emotional needs of the gifted with a broad audience.

A Counsellor who is able to integrate knowledge from different areas of expertise within a counselling service can have benefits for the gifted child with additional needs. Dr Dau-shen Ju, Clinical Psychologist and Administrator of the Assessment and Counselling Clinic at the Belin-Blank Centre shared ways in which his prior knowledge of neurological disabilities had been useful in establishing dual-diagnoses for underachieving gifted students.

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<sup>15</sup> Geake, J., (2004). *Intellectual Envy of Gifted Students*, Presented at the Henry & Jocelyn Wallace National Research Symposium on Talent Development, University of Iowa.

<sup>16</sup> Webb, J., (2004). *Accurate Assessment? Common Misdiagnoses and Dual Diagnoses of Gifted Children and Adults*, Presented at the Henry & Jocelyn Wallace National Research Symposium on Talent Development, University of Iowa.

During my Fellowship, I found a range of professional practitioners from diverse fields who have developed an understanding of giftedness and incorporate this into their work with gifted children and their families. There is also an emerging trend of busy specialists working specifically with gifted children, adolescents and adults. Parents of gifted children develop knowledge about giftedness and are sharing this information with professional colleagues and those consulted regarding their gifted child.

### **Financial Support and Philanthropy:**

Providing services for the gifted: education, counselling, conducting research, training teachers, developing curriculum and resources, establishing and evaluating programs – requires money. Sometimes, existing services, such as counselling, can be differentiated for the gifted at little or no cost. Acceleration is a good example of an educational intervention strategy that does not need funding in order to be highly effective, but teacher education to establish a knowledge base in gifted education and promote attitudinal change requires funding.

I was astounded at the level of financial support available for gifted education in the US in comparison to the extremely limited financial resources made available to gifted education in Australia. Government funding, targeted philanthropy, corporate support, private donations and family expenditure appear to be far greater in the US. A culture of philanthropy exists within the country and this has enabled gifted students, particularly those from disadvantaged populations, to access appropriate services and resources.

The Belin-Blank Centre was established and generously funded by two families. Myron and Jacqueline Blank and Connie and David Belin have been involved in developing the Centre since the first teacher education programs began in 1981. Endowments, grants and fund raising have enabled the Belin-Blank Centre to develop into a world-renowned centre of excellence in gifted education.

The Davidson Institute for Talent Development, established by Jan and Bob Davidson, provides financial assistance grants to gifted youth and support families through counselling, consultation, a website and online seminars.

The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship was founded by Steve Mariotti in 1987 and provides entrepreneurship training to low-income youth. It is a non-profit organization, funded by grants and donations and delivers education through a range of program partners.<sup>17</sup> The Goldman Sachs Foundation is a major donor to NFTE and numerous other educational institutions and programs. The Goldman Sachs Foundation's philosophy, as expressed by the Chairman, John Whitehead: "The Foundation's distinctive philanthropic approach is based on high-engagement grantmaking and encompasses a range of diverse contributions to promote educational excellence and serve exceptional young people worldwide."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship, Inc. Annual Report, 2002 – 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Whitehead, J., *A Catalyst for Opportunity*, The Goldman Sachs Foundation Annual Report, 2003.



## **CONCLUSIONS**

The Churchill Fellowship opportunity was greatly appreciated. I was able to observe, compare, learn and reflect upon a wide variety of counselling and intervention strategies that supported gifted students in England and the U.S.

I was excited and energised by the experience and returned with a vast array of resources. I learnt so much that it has been difficult to synthesise and restrict the material for this report. The people I met were generous in sharing time, expertise, experience and resources. There was great interest in gifted education and counselling in Australia and my existing knowledge and counselling practice was affirmed by the experience. There was much that I learnt and hope to share with the Australian community, but my major conclusions from the 2003 Churchill Fellowship are as follows:

- Counsellors and psychologists must be educated about the psychosocial and counselling needs of the gifted at pre-service and in-service level.
- A multidisciplinary professional body could share knowledge and perspectives of the gifted to develop understanding of their specific needs.
- School and Holiday Programs provide excellent opportunities for meeting gifted students' social, emotional, intellectual and educational needs.
- Parent education, support and advocacy skill development has a positive impact for individual children as well as on schools' educational provision.
- Philanthropy significantly benefits disadvantaged gifted students.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- An Australian national research and resource centre on gifted education should be established and funded by the Commonwealth Government to develop and implement a national strategy on education of the gifted.
- A national research and resource centre, once established, should provide education programs at pre-service, post-graduate and in-service level to teachers, school administrators, counsellors and other professionals who regularly work with children, adolescents and their families.
- Tertiary institutions whose graduates will be involved in counselling children and adolescents should include a course about the needs of gifted youth as a core curriculum component.
- A resource kit for counsellors should be developed to provide, in conjunction with a training program, information and materials related to the psychosocial, counselling and affective development needs of gifted students.

- A network of Australian counsellors working with gifted youth and adults could be established to promote skill development.
- Universities, schools and associations for the gifted should establish day camp and residential holiday programs to meet the intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted youth.
- A multidisciplinary organization or taskforce should be established to share information, perspectives and practice models to provide more integrated and effective identification, diagnosis, treatment, programming and provision of services for the gifted.
- Schools and associations for the gifted should provide parent education about giftedness and establish parent support groups designed to meet the needs of parents of gifted children.
- Relationships which are supportive – financially or through shared expertise – of gifted youth and the institutions and organizations working to enhance talent development should be facilitated via a gifted association website which details opportunities and contact details.
- Research of Australian gifted youth, particularly in relation to gender, developmental stages, ethnicity and rural issues should be encouraged by universities in order to identify the specific needs of our gifted population.
- Those working with gifted youth should explore opportunities, including a Churchill Fellowship, to learn more about provision for gifted youth.

In order to disseminate the information, I plan to undertake the following:

- Develop a series of presentations to deliver to gifted associations, parent groups, counsellors, teachers and other professional groups.
- Incorporate information into lectures I present to teachers enrolled in the Certificate of Gifted Education course at the University of NSW.
- Utilise multidisciplinary professional networks to promote a gifted focus.
- Explore opportunities to establish affective groups and holiday programs.
- Develop parent support groups using the SENG Parent Group Model.
- Investigate opportunities and distribute information regarding financial support programs available for disadvantaged gifted youth.

I value the experience and learning made possible through the Churchill Fellowship and hope to disseminate further information. I appreciate any opportunity to share and discuss these issues and welcome contact.

*Michele Juratowitch*

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