Supporting Gifted Students

WGC

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WHY TALENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DOMAIN MATTERS

Jennie Quinn & Penina Kiss

Penina and I were thrilled to share Francoys Gagne's legacy article with you in our February edition. It was a bittersweet moment, celebrating the phenomenal achievements of a giant in the field of gifted education whilst acknowledging his decision to retire with a mix of immense gratitude and sadness. His article, My Professional Legacy Concerning Academic Talent Development stirred up strong emotions about why I fell in love with gifted education and became a passionate advocate of talent development.

As a newly appointed Gifted Education Coordinator in an inner-city Sydney school 12 years ago, Gagne's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) made a complex area conceptually manageable and highly relatable. Analysis of his model, research and articles helped me understand how to identify and effectively provide for gifted students and to coordinate and lead this critical area of education. His model provided well-needed clarity around the importance of leadership and capacity building for teaching staff and our parent community and the impetus and urgency to meet the academic and social and emotional needs of the gifted students in our care.

In carrying out research for an upcoming project, I referenced the NSW Department of Education's High Potential and Gifted Education P-12 discussion paper for school leaders and teachers on the Social and Emotional Domain. Gagne's legacy is on full display in the paper and his adapted DMGT 2.0 (2009) features strongly in the research that communicates most effectively the importance of identifying and nurturing giftedness in the social domain.

According to Gagné's DMGT 2.0 (2009), students who show high potential and giftedness in the social domain typically demonstrate naturally high ability in perceptiveness, interacting, social ease, tact, influence, engagement, eloquence, and leadership. Our students lucky enough to be gifted in this domain will display these qualities in abundance or will develop them at a faster pace and with greater depth and ease than their peers. There is no denying that young people with an abundance of these qualities will be in high demand as adults and leaders of the future.

But, giftedness in this area doesn't come without significant challenges for many students. Some of these include maladaptive perfectionism, asynchrony, the forced choice dilemma, underachievement and disengagement (Smith, 2020). We are fortunate in Australia to have the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority's Personal and Social Capabilities continuum and the CASEL framework to guide our planning, programming and provisions in this area.

When I think back to my time leading Gifted Education in school settings all those years ago, I fear that as a relatively young and inexperienced Gifted Coordinator, the social domain was quite possibly the least understood and nurtured. I spent all my time dealing with the maladaptive aspects rather than nurturing the traits and behaviours needed for future eminence in this domain. Despite harnessing copious amounts of affective data, targeting this domain through high-quality programming commensurate to the student's need for accelerated and nuanced learning did not happen with consistency.

12 years later, we've certainly come a long way but in a world that desperately needs strong and compassionate leadership from socially gifted individuals, are schools consistently embedding quality social-emotional learning (SEL)? After all, if 'social giftedness is an ability to empathise with others, to seek justice for others and to work for a common good' (Sharma, 2012., p.202), it's clear that meeting the needs of these learners really does matter.

In this month's edition of the WTW Newsletter, we feature the second installment of Bernadette Bentley's podcast transcript with the Australian Council for Education and Research's (ACER) Marc Krajl: Supporting Gifted and Talented Students with Bernadette Bentley. Professor Ahmad Qablan takes a fascinating look at integrating human expertise with AI technologies to enhance STEM education with equity, transparency and inclusion and finally, Dr Denise Hofer showcases the BegIN pilot project's role in the (inclusive) promotion of talent in Lower Bavaria.

We hope you enjoy the April edition.

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The Australian Council for Education and Research (ACER) has given the WTW permission to publish an abridged transcript for Episode 2 of the Field Notes podcast; Supporting gifted and talented students with Bernadette Bentley

SUPPORTING GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS WITH BERNADETTE BENTLEY (Part 02)

Bernadette Bentley,
Education Officer Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS), Australia

In episode 2 of the podcast, Marc Kralj speaks with Bernadette Bentley, Education Officer from SCS, about how gifted and talented students may be identified, supported and challenged.

Marc: Bernadette, I'm really glad that you don't just talk about high-performing students and gifted and talented, but you address social-emotional wellbeing and the importance of identifying that we're not just looking at numbers or scores, but we're looking at the whole child. And I think, addressing, as you said, each of these areas, their talents and their pathways. I think that's crucial because we often talk about pathways at a secondary level. But identifying these early where we can, and putting things in place, I think is really quite crucial.

My next questions are around identifying students who are high-performing and possibly identified as gifted and talented. And I suppose part of the questioning is around, what assessments have you used or identified to successfully be able to track these students, and have they been useful?

Because, as we know, assessments are great but I always think about one thing: an assessment can be used well, or an assessment can be used badly. What are your thoughts on that?

Bernadette: I think it's really important that we have a number of measures to identify giftedness so we can triangulate the data. If the teacher suspects that a child may be gifted, they can consider a number of measures. So, the first one is observation, where the teacher can closely observe the child's behaviour, interaction with peers, level of engagement in class activities and their overall performance. So, paying attention to the child's curiosity and critical thinking skills and ability to grasp new concepts quickly can provide valuable insights.

A teacher observation form may be developed to capture this information, and a good starting point is Karen Rogers' book, Re-Forming Gifted Education. She has some templates in there that can be adapted to suit different contexts.

Another way is through differentiated instruction. So, teachers can provide differentiated instruction to meet the child's unique learning needs. This might involve offering more challenging activities, adjusting the pace of instruction or incorporating advanced materials to keep the child engaged and challenged.

We always talk about the breadth, the depth and the complexity of tasks that can be achieved within the stage outcomes of subjects. So, unless officially accelerated, students should continue with the same year or stage outcomes of subjects, and there's so much breadth there that you can tease out within each of those outcomes. Successful and targeted differentiation depends hugely on pre-assessment, and this supports the first professional standards of teachers – know your students and how they learn pre-assessment is so important.

The teachers can also look at formal and informal assessments, so they can conduct both the formal and informal assessments to evaluate the child's cognitive abilities, their creativity, and other potential indicators of giftedness. These assessments may include standardized tests, teacher-created assessments, and the observation of the child's problem-solving skills.

Assessments may be both subjective and objective, and they must include both ability and achievement. Assessment of learning should also include extension work that's covered within the differentiated curriculum. This is to ascertain the growth in the development of the student's knowledge and understanding through skill-based activities, and it should focus on both the process and the product.

It's really, really important that teachers and educational leaders involve the parents, so communicate with the child's parents to gather information about the child's abilities, their interests, any previous assessments or experience that may indicate giftedness. Parents can provide valuable insights into the child's development. A parent observation form could be developed to capture this information, and again, Karen Rogers' book Re-Forming Gifted Education can provide a starting point for that.

I also think providing students with enrichment opportunities as opposed to extension opportunities activities that do not relate to subject outcomes is important. Enrichment activities are those that occur outside of the classroom and do not relate to the outcomes, whereas extension activities are related to the outcome and occur in the classroom. So, you might have different types of projects. Passion projects, extracurricular activities that cater to the students' interests and strengths.

Another way of helping with gifted students –identifying them – is through flexible grouping. So, consider different types of strategies that allow the students to work with peers who share possibly similar abilities or interests, and this could provide a more stimulating learning environment and foster collaboration among your gifted students.

And, of course, professional development. You can't get enough professional development for our teachers, and just to enhance the teacher's ability to identify and support our gifted students, professional learning opportunities should be offered. So, understanding the characteristics and needs of gifted learners is so crucial for effective teaching.

Again, I come back to communication. We spoke about communication with the parents, but maintaining open communication with the child, monitoring their progress, discussing their interests and goals, and including voice and choice in their class work.

Regular communication with parents and the child it's important to ensure you have a collaborative partnership approach to the child's education.

Bernadette's final instalment will be shared in the next edition of the WorldTalentWeb.
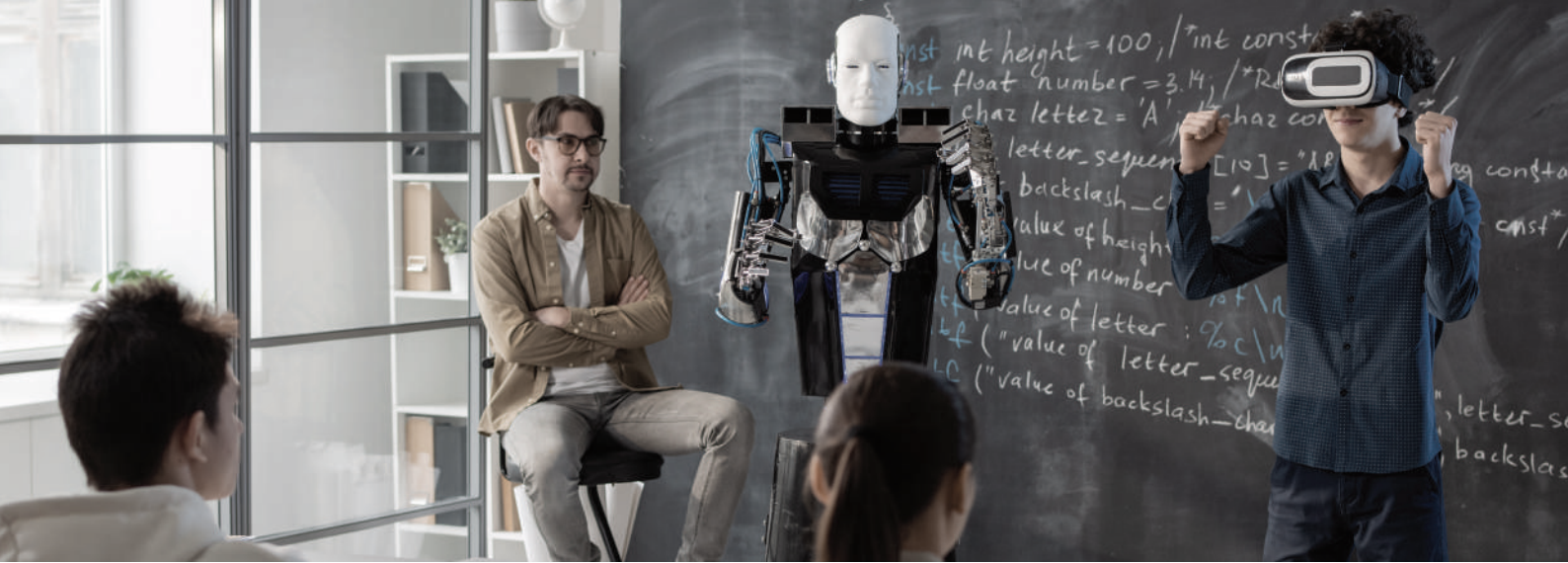
AI AND STEM EDUCATION: UNVEILING THE POTENTIAL AND ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

Professor Ahmad Qablan,
CEDU, UAEU, United Arab Emirates

AI applications offer various opportunities to enhance students' STEM learning. It can develop personalized instructional designs and pedagogical approaches, such as accessing students' performance (Wang et al., 2011; Zampirolli et al., 2021), monitoring and evaluating students' learning (Ji & Han, 2019), and predicting slow and advanced learners (Hellings & Haelermans, 2020; Lamb et al., 2021). AI also improves student-centered learning by providing adaptive and personalized tutoring (Kose & Arslan, 2017; Myneni et al., 2013) and diagnosing students' learning difficulties (Beghetto et al., 2019).

AI can also transform and enrich the educational environment and knowledge delivery (Hwang et al., 2020; Holstein et al., 2019; Yannier et al., 2020) and redesign the teacher-student relationship (Xu & Ouyang, 2022). Therefore, various AI technologies (e.g., machine learning deep learning) have been used to redesign the learning process and enhance students' learning.

AI offers several valuable applications for STEM teachers, and these applications help teachers shift from being creators of knowledge to curators of knowledge, much like the transition from being an author to an editor of a scientific publication (Noy & Zhang, 2023). Although some may believe that AI could replace teachers, this is unlikely, as teachers are human beings with unique qualities, including critical thinking and emotions, making them irreplaceable (Chan & Tsi, 2024).

Additionally, with AI, teachers can spend more time helping students learn instead of focusing on verifying student assignments. Using AI tools, students and teachers can use sub-tasks that eventually integrate to produce high-quality STEM educational outputs (Stankovski et al., 2024). Teachers often invest significant time and effort in creating learning resources like quizzes, tutorials, reading lists, and study guides. AI can alleviate this burden by automating the creation of such materials, allowing teachers to dedicate more time to direct interactions with students (Baidoo-Anu & Ansah, 2023). Moreover, teachers can shift their focus to higher-level tasks, such as curriculum and assessment design through AI tools. At the same time, students receive education tailored to meet their needs and learning styles (Schiff, 2021).

As for the standards related to using AI tools in STEM education, teachers and students need to use AI tools functionally, following specific steps and guidelines (Feldman-Maggor et al., 2024). It is worth considering that AI applications struggle to enhance social and emotional competencies developed through human interactions, which means that a balanced approach is necessary, combining the strengths of human teachers with AI technologies to achieve the desired functional integration and enhance the effectiveness of AI applications in STEM education (Chan & Tsi, 2024). Success in using AI tools is linked to the belief in integrating human intelligence with AI, which will significantly improve the use of AI (Maphoto et al., 2024).

The future of education through innovative applications lies in the synergy and integration between teachers and AI, ensuring that AI is not a replacement for teachers (Chan & Tsi, 2024). Moreover, AI applications require new user skills, such as creativity in the description, evaluation, and sensory synergy, blending human exploration with AI to discover new creative flows (Zhou & Lee, 2024). Additionally, it should not be overlooked that most recommendations related to generative AI applications in education emphasize the need to rely on these applications as supporting and complementary technologies for fundamental learning processes. Using them within a learning activities environment may be better under the teacher's guidance (McDonald et al., 2024).

Furthermore, using AI applications in STEM education must consider several ethical considerations, including data privacy, transparency, accessibility, and cultural sensitivity. It must also address potential misuse and establish scenarios for handling these issues (Nikolopoulou, 2024). To ensure comprehensive and impactful educational experiences, teachers and students must hone their unique skills in using AI tools in education (Chan & Tsi, 2024).

Regarding the ongoing debate about the benefits and harms of AI in education, there is a clear difference in opinions regarding the concerns related to using these applications in the educational environment. Some argue that using AI applications is a double-edged sword, as integrating them provides numerous potential benefits for teachers and students. Still, on the other hand, it may also create new challenges and the possibility of misuse (Ivanov et al., 2024). This debate is linked to some of the adverse effects of AI, including potential cheating, reduced critical thinking skills, misinformation, and unethical practices (Gupta et al., 2024). However, one cannot rely solely on opposing views of AI tools without considering that they are constantly being improved and updated with new data for accuracy and continuous enhancement, which could make them practical applications in education (Lee & Song, 2024).

It is worth mentioning that, despite some concerns about AI applications in education, students' perceptions of these applications are very optimistic (Abdallah, Ismail, Abdallah, & Alkaabi, 2023). This calls for efforts to invest in developing more standardized and suitable educational environments (Saihi et al., 2024).

According to the trends discussed above, which highlight the importance of AI applications in education and other trends expressing legitimate concerns about relying on AI applications, the only way to resolve the debate is to expand the testing of AI applications in various educational contexts. The context in which these tools are used may affect their effectiveness (Noroozi et al, 2024).

Despite the lack of uniformity in positive and negative feelings associated with using AI in education, practical application and experimentation are the only way to reach a consensus on AI.

This is because AI's significant benefits and possibilities to the educational process cannot be ignored, even in light of its current challenges (Lee et al., 2024). Therefore, some have mentioned that the current time is not for information literacy but for AI literacy, given the potential benefits of AI and its ability to impact the educational process radically (Lee & Song, 2024).

In this context, an analysis of several studies on AI applications in education found that AI applications can bring about significant structural changes in the educational environment. The study indicates that AI applications have the potential to improve educational interactions, increase student engagement in the learning process, and provide specialized feedback (Al-Rashaida & Massouti, 2024). This can be seen as a solid foundation for further studies framing the use of AI applications in education (Noroozi et al., 2024).

Additionally, AI plays a role in overcoming language barriers in our contemporary world, which has increasingly been characterized by globalization, creating language barriers in communication and practical learning.

Thus, language AI tools (i.e., ChatGPT) can overcome these obstacles by providing real-time translation and language support, making education more inclusive and accessible to students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

AI language applications can translate text inputs and responses between different languages, allowing students and teachers to communicate effectively. Real-time language translation eliminates the need for external translation tools or interpreters and reduces communication barriers. Students with limited proficiency in the primary language of instruction can also benefit from language support in AI, enabling them to participate fully in educational activities (Wei, 2023).

To maximize AI's potential while mitigating risks, educators must adopt a balanced approach integrating human expertise with AI technologies, ensuring equity, transparency, and inclusivity in learning. Moving forward, further research and practical applications are needed to explore AI's long-term impact on STEM education and develop best practices for its responsible and effective use in classrooms.

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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE GIFTED EDUCATION HOW CAN THE POTENTIAL OF ALL PUPILS DEVELOP?

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Introduction: Inclusive gifted education encourages educators to recognize potential in all pupils and support them accordingly. From the 2021/22 school year, the government of Lower Bavaria, together with the University of Passau and the Private University College of Teacher Education Vienna, is developing criteria for a seal of giftedness. The aim is to enable inclusive gifted education for all pupils through targeted school development measures, in particular, through potential-oriented lesson development. This article presents the BegIN - Inclusive Gifted Education pilot project in Lower Bavaria.

A seal as a possible incentive for gifted education in Austria and Germany

Austria and Germany share a common interest in the area of gifted education in wanting to do justice to the potential of their pupils through a decree that applies to all educators. In Austria, the Ministry of Education has issued a basic decree for the promotion of gifted and talented students since 2009.

This circular is binding and applies to teachers at all types of schools. In 2017, this decree was further developed to take account of the requirement to enable inclusive education in the context of gifted education. Since then, the focus has not only been on supporting (highly) gifted or (highly) achieving pupils, but also on a holistic, potential-oriented school development process that should benefit all pupils: "Inclusive education takes the diversity of children and young people seriously and attaches importance to a continuum of support and assistance in which everyone receives the material and personal assistance and support necessary for successful participation in the educational process." (BMBWF, 2017, p. 2) This demand is in line with the convention on the rights of the child. Gifted and talented education is a child's right to which every learner is entitled (UNICEF, 1989).

In Germany, the basic position of the federal states on talent-appropriate support is similar, according to a resolution passed by the Conference of Culture Ministers in 2009 (p. 2): "Gifted and developmentally appropriate support is the task of all educational institutions. All children and young people must be included. (...) Gifted and talented support is geared towards the individual talent and personality of the child or young person and their specific needs."

The OECD is publishing a study in 2021 which draws attention to the fact that promoting talent in the school context depends on teachers. This means that teachers should be made aware of the need to promote the diverse potential of their pupils (OECD, 2021). With a seal of giftedness, schools make it clear to the outside world that they want to do justice to the individual potential of learners and strive for individualized and differentiated teaching as part of their school development processes. In-school teacher training courses, which are held in advance at interested school locations by the Talent.Person.Potential specialist unit at the Private University College of Teacher Education, Vienna (German: KPH Vienna / Lower Austria) show that many schools have great potential to do justice to the talents of their pupils.

A heterogeneous team of teachers, a corresponding pedagogical attitude, different learning spaces, a wide range of afternoon activities and, above all, an interested school management are considered important resources for school development processes that promote giftedness (Rolff, 2016). The criteria of a label provide schools with a predetermined framework and give them a common direction. For gifted education to actually benefit all learners, all teaching staff need a theoretical line of reasoning, which in turn makes the teacher training colleges responsible.

In Vienna, the Department of Education has been awarding a seal of giftedness to elementary schools since 2007/08, and since 2018/19, secondary schools can also be certified. More than 25 school locations in Vienna now have a Seal of Giftedness. Interest in this seal is growing not only in Vienna, but throughout Austria. The federal states are responding to this and are currently also developing a corresponding seal. This also applies to Lower Bavaria, where criteria for a seal of giftedness have also been developed since the 2021 school year as part of the BegIN (inclusive gifted education in Lower Bavaria) pilot project.

The criteria of a label provide schools with a predefined framework and give them a common direction. For gifted education to actually benefit all learners, all teaching staff need a theoretical line of reasoning, which in turn makes the teacher training colleges responsible.

From concept to guidelines: The criteria of the Quality Circle for Inclusive Gifted Education

The criteria for obtaining a BegIN label are derived from current theory on inclusive gifted education and current research findings from school development and school management (e.g. Sutherland, 2008; Solzbacher & Behrensen, 2015; Kiso & Fränkel, 2021; Sternberg, 2021; Rolff, 2023).

The currently diverse literature on these topics indicates that inclusive gifted education is currently attracting particular interest from educators, as they want to do justice to the growing heterogeneity of their pupils. This requires a concept that combines inclusive talent development and school development on the one hand and considers the current lack of different resources in schools on the other.

This concept was developed by Hansen (2019) as part of the Quality Circle for Inclusive Talent Development (QuIB for short). The QuIB serves as a theoretical guideline for the pilot project and is based on the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2019).

In order to avoid the criticism that theoretical findings are difficult to implement in everyday teaching, the criteria were repeatedly reflected upon, questioned, discussed and ultimately adapted during the course of the pilot project based on the practical experience of the individual stakeholders. This process sets new standards in the development of such a seal in German-speaking countries, as it requires a direct exchange between school authorities, academics and educators from school practice on an equal footing. They have to agree on a common goal and find a uniform way to achieve it.

How authorities, science and practice cooperate with each other

In 2020, Schrader & Hasselhorn stated that successful cooperation between science, practice and authorities is not a matter of course: "Successful cooperation between science, politics and practice can only succeed if all parties involved accept the dilemma that science has more knowledge than politics and practice can use, and politics and practice have more problems than science can solve." (Schrader & Hasselhorn, 2020, p. 2)

In order to combine findings from science, needs from practice and demands from politics (school authorities), numerous educators with different expertise were invited to the pilot project phase. The authority trusts that schools should develop "bottom-up", in other words, from within. This means that the criteria must be practicable, theoretically justifiable and comprehensible for all school stakeholders.

This requires a professional and constructive exchange between all project members at eye level. Those responsible at the Lower Bavarian government were present at all meetings, as were the head teachers. They did not hand over responsibility to other positions but were present to answer critical questions about the implementation of the project at the schools.

This close cooperation resulted in the following criteria:
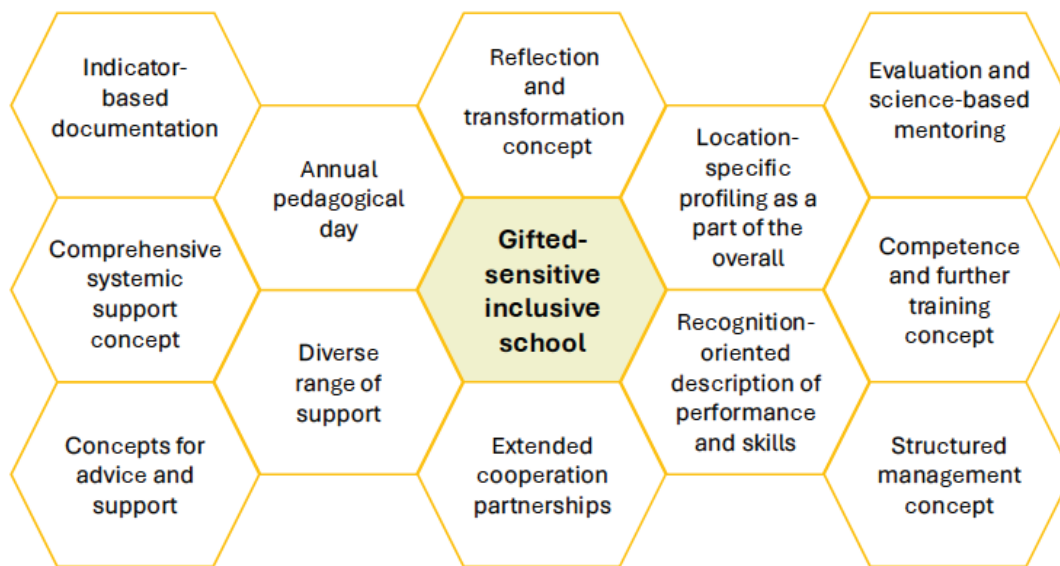
On closer inspection, there are parallels to the Vienna Seal of Giftedness, which is not surprising given the close cooperation between the University of Passau, the Lower Bavarian government and the Private University College of Teacher Education Vienna.

The KPH Vienna / Lower Austria has been advising and supporting schools in gifted and talented education for years and supports the Lower Bavarian government with its experience.

As a result, the Vienna Seal of Giftedness has been a pioneer in strength-focused school development for years, from which many other national and international (federal) states can learn and benefit. The development and implementation of the BegIN Seal of Talent has been scientifically monitored from the outset. The knowledge gained will also enable Viennese schools to develop in a more targeted manner (Meyers et al., 2012).

Conclusion

Inclusive gifted education encourages educators to recognize potential in all pupils and support them accordingly. These support measures do not only come into effect once performance has been achieved.

All pupils are supported "on suspicion". The teachers assume that the learners have potential and see it as their responsibility to make this potential visible through the support they offer. BegIN sets an important example in the (inclusive) promotion of talent. Inclusion concerns us all and needs a broader definition, just like giftedness. This affects everyone in education, not just individual educational institutions.

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ANNOUNCING THE 3RD WORLD GIFTEDNESS CENTER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE!

The World Giftedness Center (WGC) of the Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation for Medical and Educational Sciences (Hamdan Foundation) is excited to announce the 3rd World Giftedness Center International Conference, taking place virtually from October 20 to 23, 2025!

This year's conference comes at a pivotal time as artificial intelligence and digital technology continue to reshape the world. These advancements present both challenges and opportunities in the field of gifted education and talent development, making this an essential event for researchers, educators, and experts in the field.

What to Expect

Join us as we bring together leading international researchers, practitioners, and experts to explore the latest innovations in gifted education. Through engaging presentations, thought-provoking discussions, and expert-led sessions, attendees will gain valuable insights into:
- Leveraging AI to enhance gifted education programs
- Developing innovative curricula to meet the needs of today's gifted learners
- Exploring best practices in talent development amid rapid technological change

Save the Date!

📆 When? October 20–23, 2025
🌍 Where? Virtual (Online)
🗣 Language? English

Be part of this global gathering and help shape the future of gifted education and talent development!

For more details, visit: **www.wgc.ae**

CALL FOR ARTICLES

We would like to invite you to write an article for the WorldTalentWeb newsletter. The theme and writing style are open for the author to determine.

Articles could take the shape of an interview with a specialist in the field, a report on research or a recent event, a book or resource review etc. The guidelines for the article are listed below.

Please submit your article to the following email: WorldTalentWeb@ha.ae

Guidelines for submitting an article for the WorldTalentWeb newsletter:

1. A submitted article should be between 800 to 2000 words, not including references.
2. WorldTalentWeb newsletter caters to the international community and thus, all articles should be written in English.
3. American or British spelling is accepted.
4. All non-native English speakers should make sure to check their articles for language accuracy before submitting them.
5. The article should be in Times New Roman font, size 12 pt.
6. Authors should avoid using footnotes.
7. Authors should adhere to the APA style and/or formatting guidelines provided in the APA Manual, 7th Edition.
8. The article should be submitted with embedded photos, and tables, and figures if relevant.
9. The article should be submitted as an email attachment as a Microsoft Word document.
10. Articles should be word-processed and single-spaced with 1 inch (2.54 cm) at the top, bottom, left, and right of every page as per the APA 7th edition requirements.
11. Authors should strictly observe the copyrights-requirements and cite the work of others correctly.
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14. If an article was published before elsewhere, then only submit a summary of the original document with acknowledgment.
15. Authors are encouraged to use supportive pictures.
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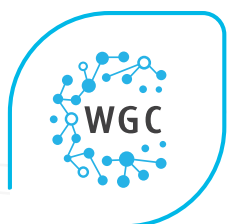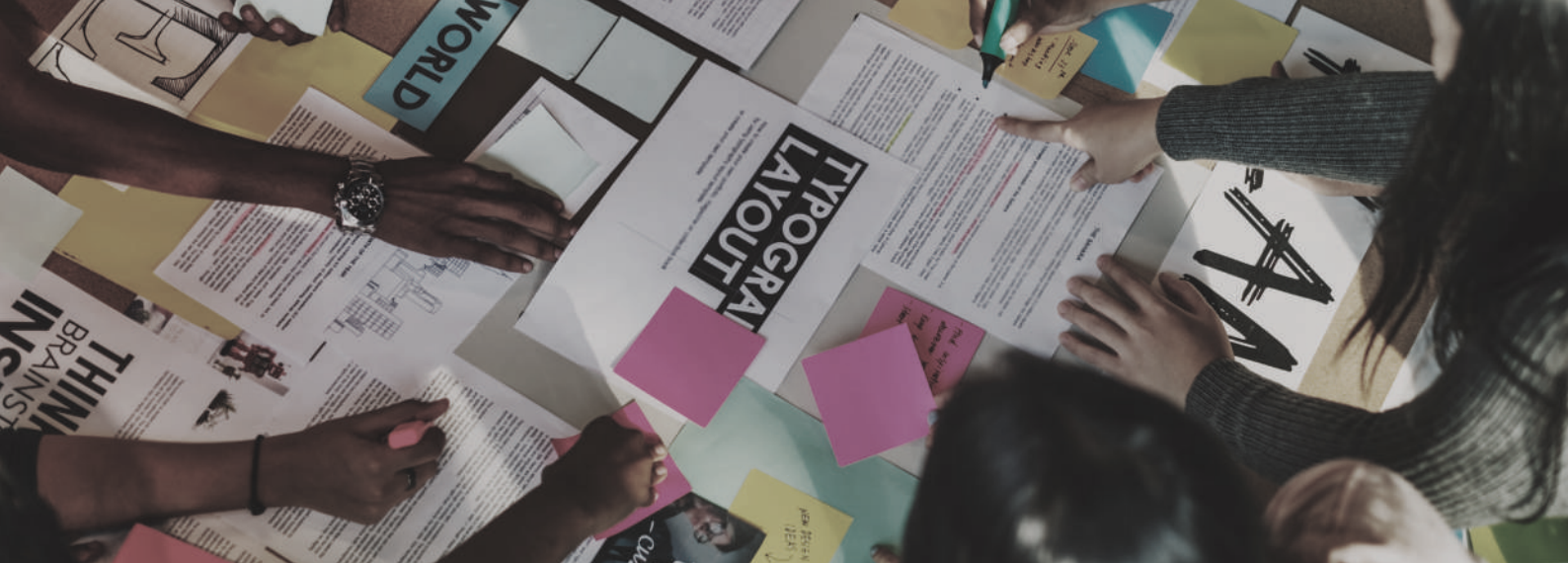## CALL FOR ADVERTISING CONFERENCES

Looking to share your conference with the world?

Send a brief description of the conference to:
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"The WorldTalentWeb newsletter's team is very happy to advertise your conference."

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