A Quilt for their Talents

What families can do to support their children’s strengths and abilities
Ponder this

- In many ways we are the same and yet we are each unique.

- Enjoy the similarities and honor the differences!
Everyone has...

- Me
- Mine
- You
- Yours
Emotionally charged words

- bright
- smart
- curious
- highly able
- gifted
Human Abilities

Where do they come from?

- Nature vs. nurture
- Survival of the fittest
- Innate, Learned
- some of each?
Let me tell you a story…

- Alfred Binet

and the U.S. Army
Result...

- IQ tests
  - The Bell Curve
To g or not to g?

- 1?
- 2?
- 7?
- 9?
- 150?

For more about this see
From Spearman to Gardner

- **Spearman** 1904-ish
  - 2 “Factors”

- **Thurstone** 1925-ish
  - 7 “Factors”

- **Guilford** 1960-ish
  - 150 “Abilities”

- **Gardner** 1983-ish
  - 8 “Intelligences”
Many ways of being…

- Bright, smart, curious, highly able, gifted, talented
- 8 or more
  - musical-rhythmic
  - visual-spatial
  - verbal-linguistic
  - logical-mathematical
  - bodily-kinesthetic
  - interpersonal
  - intrapersonal
  - naturalistic
  - existential or moral
It’s not the label!

- It’s the education
  - Fit
  - Pace
  - Interests
  - Strengths
At school – The Blanket

- What is
  - Academic subjects
  - “Specials”
  - Middle of the bell curve
  - Left side of the bell curve
At School?

- Differentiation
  - Interest
  - Readiness
  - Process
  - Product
At School?

- Critical thinking
- Creative Problem Solving
- Scholarliness
- Higher order thinking skills
- Metacognition
  - Students
  - Teachers
  - Administrators
Gap?

How do you fill it?
Let’s rethink…

…the way we do school

(Dr. Carol Ann Tomlinson, 1997)
Rethinking Strengths & Abilities

- Talented – O.K. or not O.K.?
  - Music
  - Art
  - Dance
  - Sports
- Why?
Gifted – O.K. or not O.K.

- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- English Language Arts
- All of the above
- Some of the above
- Which ones?
- Why?
What it is…

Definition of gifted/talented

- The combination of above average ability, creativity, and self motivation working together on any human endeavor.

The work of Dr. Joseph Renzulli
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_hPhKvduts
Know Fact from Fiction

- Educate yourself
- Get it from the experts.
  - National Assoc. for Gifted Children
    - www.nagc.org
      - Parent tab
      - Common Myths
        - http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/myths-about-gifted-students
  - University of CT at Storrs
    - http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/parentrp.html
Fiction

- One size fits all children’s learning.
  - “I taught it. Now it’s up to them to get it.”

- Only 3% to 10% of the population is talented.

- IQ’s is constant.
Fiction

- Schools give children everything they need to be academically successful.

- Schools fully meet the learning needs of all children.

- Learning always comes easily when a person is working in their interest area.
Fiction

- If you are smart learning is easy.

- If learning something doesn’t come easily then you should stop doing it because it’s not “your thing.”

- Kids with talent will be fine no matter what the situation.
  - They can manage on their own.
Fiction

- Gifted/talented children have fewer problems than others.
- Bright children do not need or deserve extra time and attention.
- All children with talents are self-directed.
- Underachievers just need to try harder.
Fiction

- A gifted/talented child's family always prizes his/her abilities.
- Gifted/talented children should teach others.
- If a student is really gifted they don’t need help.
Fact

- About 3% of the population is talented in each area of ability
  - If there are 8 intelligences then that makes 24% of the population

- Children must be challenged in order to learn.

- Boredom breeds low achievement.
Fact

- The area in which a person has talent does not necessarily develop at the same rate as the rest of the person.
  - This causes something called “asynchrony”
    - It means that the child’s body, mind and talent area are not growing at the same rate.

- When a person is doing their talent, they lose track of time.
Fact

- People have different learning and thinking strengths and preferences under various conditions

  - “Learning Styles” are not necessarily stable.
  - “Thinking Styles” can be influenced by the situation.
Learning and thinking preferences

- Auditory
- Visual
- Kinesthetic

- Abstract
- Concrete
- Sequential
- Random

- Abstract = theoretical, global, an interpretation
- Concrete = tangible, clear, definite
- Sequential = in an order, organized
- Random = no particular order, amorphic, floating
Fact

- Everyone does better when they work in an area of their interest.
  - Interests can be used to motivate a person.
- Interests tend to stay stable for a year or more.
- Interests can be discovered through
  - Interest survey
  - Observing and listening
  - Asking
- Knowing a child’s interests can help
  - the child
  - his/her teacher
  - his/her parents
Success requires being present and work

- “80% of life is just showing up.” Woody Allen
  - “The other 20% is work.” MG Stewart

- “Genius is about 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration.” Thomas Edison
Parents often know their children better than anyone else.

Parents are the legal guardians of the children and therefore have power.

Children can have friends of different ages especially if they have similar interests.
So now what?

- Reconsider the Blanket
  - One size fits most

- Consider... The Quilt
  - Individualization
What Schools Can Do

- **Acceleration**
  - No training needed
  - No expense
  - Overcoming myths
  - Other obstacles
    - underachievement

- **Enrichment**
  - Takes some training
  - Not rocket science
Acceleration

- 20 years of research on thousands of students
  - 20 Kinds
    - Not just grade skipping
    - Shouldn’t hurt students
- Something schools can do without cost
- A Nation Empowered (Free download)
Enrichment 1.0

Increasing Depth and Complexity

Depth
- Language of the discipline
- Details
- Patterns
- Rules
- Trends
- Unanswered Questions
- Ethics
- Big Ideas

Complexity
- Over time
- Multiple perspectives
- Across disciplines
BIG IDEAS a.k.a. Universal themes
Concepts that are applicable to all subjects, all peoples, over all of time

Adaptation
Balance
Beauty
Change
Community
Conflict
Exploration

Force
Order
Patterns
Power
Relationships
Structure
Systems
Truth

Inspired by the work of Dr. Sandra Kaplan
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McEldMETSnw&list=PL8Fgt5nsYzSb_KFyfr2azi9mIARNZcFpx
Enrichment 2.0

- Independent Investigations of Real World Problems
  - The work of Dr. Joseph Renzulli
  - Type III of Schoolwide Enrichment Model
    - Independent Study +
    - Solution to a real world problem
      - Product or service
Enrichment Activity

- Content topic
- + interest
- + enrichment
- + product
- + process

Enriched assignment

Example:
- U.S. Civil War
  - Music
  - Trends
  - Composition
  - Performance

The student will study various compositions of music written during the U.S. Civil War seeking to determine specific trends in that music. The student will then create their own musical composition that depicts one of those trends and subsequently perform it on an instrument of their choosing.
Differentiation

- Like juggling
  - one in each hand and one in the air
- Can be done by
  - Interest
  - Readiness
  - Process
  - Product
- Requires some training
  - Carol Ann Tomlinson
  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TRGI3iXoAE&list=PLOXUrDMSVPnDeKVZTOfi2pjWMegTcRCD
Working with the school

- Be respectful
- Pose the problem
- Ask don’t tell
  - What they feel they can do
- Their limitations
  - Lack of education in gifted
  - Myths about gifted and acceleration
- One piece at a time
- You get more bees with honey than vinegar
- Ultimately you are the child’s legal guardian
  - Neglect is a crime
The Other pieces of the Quilt

- Help your child
  - Explore — new or classic people, places, and things
  - Develop skills — like professionals in the child’s interests
  - Investigate - anything of interest to the child
  - Create - tinker, invent, solve
When?

- **Summer** – their idea of fun
  - Summer camps for everything
    - [http://www.nagc.org/summer/intro.html#northeast](http://www.nagc.org/summer/intro.html#northeast)

- **Weekends**
  - Here is one example.
  - Visit places of their interest.

- **After school**
  - Connect with a mentor.
  - Take classes.
    - **Be careful that the class uses the methods of professionals.**
  - Widen their horizons.
  - Ask a practicing professional in the area of your child’s interest who to go to for classes or mentoring.
Scholarliness

Support and Encourage your child to...

- be prepared
- consider multiple perspectives
- be curious
- draw conclusions
- exercise the mind
- have academic humility
- have vision
- infer
- make connections
- participate
- persevere
- ponder
- record information
- save ideas
- set goals (long and short)
- seek excellence (not perfection)
- strive
- take intellectual risks
- thirst for knowledge
- use multiple resources

Based on the work of Dr. Sandra Kaplan -
Social and Emotional issues

- Overexciteabilities - extra sensitive
  - Physical
  - Emotional
    - From the work of Dabrowski

- Perfectionism

- Legalism

- “Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted”
  - [Sengifted.org](http://Sengifted.org)
Publications that help support talents

- Books
  - Fiction with “universal themes”
  - Newberry Award winners
  - Non-fiction with fantastic illustrations
    - DK series, Time series, Eyewitness series etc.
  - Self-help
    - “Gifted Kids Survival Guides”
Publications for parents

- **Magazines**
  - “Gifted Child Today”
    - published by Prufrock Press
    - [http://www.prufrock.com](http://www.prufrock.com)
  - “Parenting for High Potential”
    - Published by the National Assoc. for Gifted Children
    - [www.nagc.org/Publications/Parenting/index.html](http://www.nagc.org/Publications/Parenting/index.html)
Television

programs that match or pique your child’s interests

- Not all TV is bad
  - Public Broadcasting
  - Discovery Channel
  - History Channel

- Television viewing should be done with parents and monitored by parents as much as possible.
Web sites that support talent development

- [http://www.massgifted.org](http://www.massgifted.org) - Massachusetts association
- [http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/) - Northwestern University Center for Talent Development
- [http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/parents.htm](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/parents.htm) - great information site
- [http://www.davidsongifted.org/](http://www.davidsongifted.org/)
- [http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/](http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/)
Web sites for the kids

- For those who like math games or puzzles

- For those who like to read
  - [http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books](http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books)

- For those who like science
  - [http://science.discovery.com](http://science.discovery.com)

- For those who like history
  - [http://www.historychannel.com/](http://www.historychannel.com/)
Videos that support talent development

- Akeelah and the Bee
- Billy Elliot
- Good Will Hunting
- Matilda
- Mr. Holland’s Opus
- October Sky
- Remember the Titans
- Searching for Bobby Fisher
- The Sound of Music etc.

Any others that about gifted kids or the Universal Themes

*Parents should monitor video choices and watch with the children.*
Publishers

- ASCD
- Corwin Press
- The Critical Thinking Company
- Free Spirit Publishing
- Great Potential Press
- Kendall Hunt
- Mindware
- NAGC
- Prufrock Press
- Royal Fireworks Press
Your part....

- **Finding** - materials and resources.
- **Driving** - to sites, museums, libraries.
- **Supporting and Encouraging** - NO MATTER WHAT!
  - The Little Engine that Could was right!
- **Becoming** - informed
  - Learn what works from the experts.
- **Getting** - raw materials from which to create.
  - Have stuff around the house that encourages creative thinking and problem solving.
- **Scheduling** - busy is good, stressed is bad.
- **Stitching** - it all together.
- **Joy** - make and keep it positive.
Good Luck

- You are half way there already.
- Love them no matter what!
- Give it time.
- You *are* in charge.
- You *do* have power.
- You *can* do this.

**RELAX. It will come.**
Glossary: words that can help you advocate for your child’s talent development

- **Acceleration** – moving ahead once something is mastered.
- **Cluster grouping** – grouping students in classes by similar educational needs.
- **Compacting** – testing and skipping what is already known for something more challenging.
- **Creativity** – fluency (lots of ideas), flexibility (unusual ideas), originality (degree of uniqueness), elaboration (adding more detail).
- **Differentiation** – modifying curriculum and instruction to better suit student learning needs.
- **Enrichment** – increasing depth and complexity without using material of future lessons.
- **Flexible Grouping** – temporarily grouping students by similar interests, readiness or products, for a certain section of learning.
- **SEM** also known as The Schoolwide Enrichment Model – a high quality program for talent development of all students.
- **Telescoping** – shrinking information or learning into less time.
- **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)** – a level of difficulty that is a challenge but not too frustrating for the student.
For more specific assistance go to...

- www.massgifted.org
  - Click the “Contact Us” button
    - It will come to my email
      - I will respond!
Presentation topics and professional development available from MG Stewart – all topics in this presentation +

- Creative Thinking
- Critical Thinking
- Differentiating for Yourself
- Gifted ed. on a Napkin
- Higher Level Thinking
- Increasing Depth and Complexity
- Scholarliness
- Social and Emotional Needs of Bright Children
- The Whole Apple, Not Just “The Core”
- Transgender and Gifted