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Citation: First published in the SENGvine Newsletter, December 2011

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Online since: December 2011

A Consultative Approach for Working with Gifted Students Based on “The Eight Great Gripes of Gifted Kids”

by Judy Cardarella

It is important that gifted students be given the opportunity to determine the direction their lives should take and have a supportive team to help map out their journey. The term “team” is used loosely to apply to the person(s) working with the student as facilitator(s). At its minimum interpretation, this team will include the parents, a teacher/counselor, and an educational consultant. The intention of this paper is to define the need and the responsibilities to be filled by the educational consultant. The consultant must serve as a resource as well as understand the issues unique to gifted students.

Leta Stetter Hollingworth serves as a good example for an advocate/consultant for gifted students. Her work was conducted from about 1916 until her untimely death in 1939. She is credited as a founder of gifted education. As a former gifted student who experienced the challenges of operating in an unsympathetic world, she conducted research and developed means of identification and instructional models still used (Klein, 2000). She developed methods to understand the unique needs of gifted students, including social needs, and counsel them (Klein, 2000). She considered gifted children to be one of society’s marginalized groups and sought to change their standing (Klein, 2000). The comprehensive approach she took on behalf of gifted children represents how an educational consultant for the gifted should operate. There must be an understanding of the unique needs and perspectives of the gifted, a passion to respond to those needs, as well as an educational environment that is responsive to them.

An educational consultant for the gifted can be an advantage to any gifted program. Many school districts have an individual trained to satisfy some version of this role. Gifted students in a more urban setting have the opportunity for diverse experiences that will assist in the “mapping” process. Gifted students in rural or underserved communities need a consultant who can provide this kind of support on a “floating” or contract basis. Many rural or otherwise underserved communities do not have the resources or population to attract someone to fill this role on a full-time basis. The nature of these communities results in gifted students having an educational experience more isolating and less responsive than that of gifted students in more diverse communities. It is important that an educational consultant serving students in this kind of setting have an appreciation for these students’ circumstances. Developing a model based on “The Eight Great Gripes of Gifted Kids” would ensure consideration for the needs of the underserved gifted students.

EIGHT GREAT GRIPES OF GIFTED KIDS

1. No one explains what being gifted is all about
2. School is too easy and too boring
3. Parents, teachers, and friends expect us to be perfect all the time
4. Friends who really understand us are few and far between.

5. Kids tease us about being smart.
6. We feel overwhelmed by the number of things we can do in life.
7. We feel different and alienated.
8. We worry about world problems and feel helpless to do anything about them.

(Delisle & Galbraith, 2002)

“The Eight Great Gripes of Gifted Kids” appeared for the first time in the book *The Gifted Kids’ Survival Guide: For Ages 10 & Under* (Galbraith, 1999). It was developed from responses to surveys, and discussions volunteered by 400 students who were identified as gifted. It points out the sense of alienation that students in this group regularly experience. There are several different definitions for giftedness. With society’s inability to agree on a universal definition for the term giftedness, it is understandable that students who are gifted are confused by the label, and the meaning(s) associated with that label. In referring to gifted children, Roeper stated, “Children who grow up with a strong Self will understand they can create their own niche in the world” (2004). The goal of the gifted child’s community is to help them grow up with a strong Self.

1. No one explains what being gifted is all about

Gifted students, who are questioning and self-aware, express the “gripe” that no one explains what being gifted is all about. They are told they are gifted and demonstrate gifted behavior, so adults may assume that they “know” and do not need to be told what giftedness is. However, adults must accept gifted students’ need to question and understand themselves and their environment. The failure of the family to understand the gifted child’s needs is further addressed under Gripe #3, “Parents, teachers, and friends expect us to be perfect all the time.” If a child has a health issue, such as diabetes, family and school would support the condition. Similarly, giftedness is a condition, of sorts, that requires informing the student and offering necessary support.

While the gifted students’ interpretation of this lack of explanation may be one of being “left out of the loop,” it is probably more a lack of knowing what to say. The term giftedness is argued and misunderstood by many people, including the gifted themselves, those in their community, the non-gifted, and those outside the gifted community. Terms such as talented or gifted, if not defined, with universally accepted definitions, have little meaning. Communication is only meaningful when each side understands what the other side means and responds on the basis of that understanding.

What is society’s role in defining the terms used to describe talent and giftedness? Is society’s ruling of what constitutes talent and/or giftedness valid as reflecting the values of society (Kendrick, 1998)? An example of the lack of agreement on giftedness is the debate over how to categorize savant behavior, which is high-functioning behavior in a specific area, with other behaviors by the same individual reflecting low-functioning behavior. The debate is around whether, on the one hand, these high-functioning behaviors reflect intelligence, or, on the other hand, are over-learned and have no basis in intelligence (Wallace, 2008). The discussion hinges on definitions that are ambiguous or have not been clarified adequately to be meaningful when applied to a real situation.

Regardless of society’s position, the lack of a definition for the term attached to them places the gifted in a precarious role, especially for children and young people. A short response to the question, “What is giftedness?” may not be forthcoming. The inability to provide such a response warrants a discussion with the gifted child. An educational consultant should understand this need, and begin the relationship with the gifted child with a discussion on this topic. The discussion could serve as part of the introduction phase, as well as provide common ground. The lack of a definition for giftedness reflects a lack of agreement among educators. The inability to agree upon a definition is a result of the varied approaches to giftedness (Harrison, 2004). Dalzell remarks that the “diverse nature of what is considered gifted is an interesting comment on the broad-mindedness of our current culture” (Dalzell, 1998). Modern concepts of intelligence are no longer tied to an IQ score or a specific ranking (Robinson & Clinkenbeard, 1998). This is probably a positive development, but it makes the task of defining giftedness that much more complex.

One of the giants in gifted education is Annemarie Roeper. She expressed that “giftedness exists in the heart and soul” (Roeper, 2004). A gifted child will not be satisfied with a superficial explanation of giftedness, such as a specific score, or “doing well.” The awareness and “need to know,” traits associated with giftedness, demand a better explanation. Gifted children need to understand the significance of test scores, what the scores measure, and what these scores mean to them. Creativity is often a component of the gifted intellect, making a gifted individual receptive to an analogy that can place giftedness in perspective. The goal for the educational consultant and the gifted child is to reach an understanding of what being gifted means to that specific individual. There are common traits and shared areas of interest, but the experience of each individual is unique. Discussing the uniqueness of the child’s experience of giftedness both validates and empowers the child. It also helps introduce

the idea of destiny and the possibilities of the future. These are areas that a gifted child should be encouraged to think about and explore.

During a discussion of what it means to be gifted, the educational consultant can help the student examine the idea of who s/he considered gifted, including any family members. It is difficult to exclude a genetic component when discussing talent (Tremblay & Gagné, 2001). This kind of conversation helps the child see common ground with others, possibly family members, contributing to his/her sense of being in an understanding environment. It also promotes the idea of the child's being a part of a gifted community. By developing a sense of a community of which she/he is a part, the child can neutralize any feelings of isolation and/or exclusion.

2. School is too easy and too boring

This is a practical issue, but one that requires involvement with whomever—school, teacher, or parent—is managing the child's educational program. There are two steps to overcoming “easy and boring.” The first one is properly to identify a child's areas of strengths, gifts, and talents. Ensuring each student is correctly identified and educated is the goal of assessments for placement purposes. One of the most difficult hurdles to this step is finding an effective means of identifying giftedness in these students, which is an area that is misunderstood and warrants clarification among educators. Educators would benefit from an understanding of the makeup of giftedness and the processes used to identify students who are gifted. The current attitude on identification moves away from the historical emphasis on standardized testing and the limitations of these tests to measure giftedness (Scot, Callahan, & Urquhart, 2009). The movement away from these traditional methods of testing for giftedness is based on the fact that such tests often require students to conform to a certain expectation of performance that may not include unusual perspectives or creativity. The possibility of not identifying giftedness is a tragic consequence for a child seeking validation and support. Proper steps for identification can help prevent this occurrence.

A caution regarding the use of assessments is the validity and reliability of the assessment instrument. It is necessary to understand testing constructs and test interpretation, and to have a process in place to ensure these are applied with consistency. An additional point of caution is the assessment's ability to identify specific factors. Frequently, a test is reported to measure certain traits. Based on reported use and success, it is implemented often at the recommendation of the developers of the tests or people peripherally involved with its development and dissemination. An assessment may ultimately prove not to measure what its developers and proponents thought it measured (Kranzler, Keith, & Flanagan, 2000). It is the responsibility of the educational consultant to be familiar with various assessments and know which ones to recommend based on performance. Many times, assessments have already been administered to the student, and the educational consultant must be familiar with success rates and interpretation processes to ensure the results are reliable to use for building an educational plan for the student. It is unfortunate when something intended to help proves to be unhelpful. However, it is important to listen to the student's response to the assessment results. If he/she questions a certain outcome, consider re-assessing. Belief in the child's self-knowledge is an important aspect of the child/consultant relationship. Taking action in response to a child's questions demonstrates this belief.

The second area to address regarding the “easy and boring gripe” is curriculum. Depending upon the options available through the school, the educational consultant may need to work with the school to modify the student's curriculum. Modification to the curriculum may take the form of enrichment, ability grouping, acceleration, or development of a self-contained classroom if such a program is not already in place. If the school does not have the resources or the inclination to provide a responsive curriculum for gifted students, the consultant role should provide resources for alternatives, including additional educational support, private school, or home schooling.

Private school is a consideration in school districts that have no plan for the educational needs of gifted students. There are various reasons for the absence of gifted programming. The school may have made a decision on how to distribute resources available, it may not see gifted education as a priority, or it may feel there are not enough students who would benefit from such a program. Regardless of the reasons, the lack of a gifted program or lack of interest in developing one may direct the educational consultant to recommend private school. There are several private schools that specialize in gifted education. Ones that are not focused on gifted education usually offer a gifted program as part of the curriculum. The consultant role includes providing the names of any available schools that would be appropriate for the specific student's needs. Knowledge of financial resources, including qualifying and application steps, are important parts of the consultant's duties.

Another option to an unresponsive school curriculum is home schooling. There are many resources available to support students and parents who decide this is the best direction to fulfill the educational needs of a gifted child. The consultant can help guide this process, determining the parents' ability to serve as teachers, and the extent to which they can function alone. There are home school networks that help with curriculum and social arrangements. The home schooling parent must be

committed to non-traditional learning opportunities to fill in gaps and support the learning framework. Mentoring and adventures are both tools to be worked into a home school schedule to enrich the experience (Sheehan, 2002). There may be challenges with motivation and self-discipline to stay committed to assignments and goals, especially if there are no other students to provide interaction and stimulation. Also, the consultant should be familiar with a Learning Style Inventory to be administered to the student. The results of the LSI can provide some direction on how to build a responsive instructional approach. Freedom from the stress of a traditional school may be an advantage to a sensitive child, but it is important to ensure that this time is utilized in a productive way. Regardless of the educational format chosen, early education should provide foundations for later learning.

The issue of school's being "boring" may reflect a lack of challenge or interest in the curriculum. However, it may also be a lack of responsiveness of the curriculum to individual needs. The obvious example is Bill Gates, who did not finish college. Some interesting facts were uncovered as a result of an examination of college freshmen who were the first in their families to attend college. Their families had no experience in this area to offer advice or guidance on the experience of college. Because of this lack of personal experience with higher education as part of family history, students developed their own expectation of college (Olenchak & Hebert, 2002). The educational experience may be "boring" for gifted students if it does not meet their needs or expectations. An educational consultant should explore this area with the student. The student can have a goal for career, or at least a field, and then get help in understanding the educational requirements to achieve that goal. This will allow for a more directed effort and an understanding achieved through having participated in determining the goal and the path to achieve the goal. By providing the student with control in making these decisions, the educational consultant is also increasing the likelihood that the educational plan will engage and excite the student, providing motivation for participation and performance.

With all best efforts, the gifted child may still be at odds with his/her school environment. Another approach is to make this setting more interesting and more challenging. This can be achieved through participation in non-academic school activities. Both in-school and outside activities involve factors beyond the actual activities, including societal support, appreciation of the area of talent, and environmental supports. They also provide experience in short-term enjoyment, and long-term goals based on the many aspects surrounding extracurricular activities (Olszewski-Kubilius & Lee, 2004). Other gains from participation include mastery, setting and attaining goals, and promoting the desire to excel.

Participation in such activities as cited above is also helpful when addressing the issue of friends, Gripe #4. Being exposed to other students in other roles often different from their academic circle will broaden the circle of potential friends. It also broadens the student's interests and well-roundedness, by the inclusion of non-academic activities. Experiences in areas not customarily included in academic curriculum, such as art classes, museum classes, or after-school or weekend science programs also expand the students' awareness of potential careers, and lifestyles.

3. Parents, teachers, and friends expect us to be perfect all the time

Working with the family helps to overcome issues of expectations, stress, and pressure the gifted child may experience. One recommended method is a systems perspective. The systems approach places value on the importance of the function of roles filled by the child and various family members. The role the child fills in the family, and whether it is by choice or assignment, may be the basis of a societal unbalance when he/she assumes the same role, often an adult one, when operating outside the family (Thomas & Ray, 2006). This is particularly true of the gifted child who is capable of operating in an adult manner. This pattern of behavior may have been accepted within the family circle but may result in garnering negative attention in other settings such as school, particularly in social contexts. Society's refusal to allow the student to operate in his/her usual manner is frustrating and invalidating to the child. Meeting this response from outside the family circle may result in the child's questioning the validity, or honesty, of what has occurred and what has been accepted in the family setting. Feelings of mistrust or being treated with disrespect may be the result of this experience.

When working with the parents and child, it is helpful to take a developmental approach, which promotes appropriate parent-child interactions (Dalzell, 1998), encouraging communication. By seeing behaviors and interactions in context, the educational consultant can draw inferences from the family dynamic and, if deemed necessary, make appropriate referrals (Thomas & Ray, 2006). This kind of relationship also contributes to the lifelong intellectual and emotional growth of the gifted individual (Dalzell, 1998). Authentic and comfortable communication patterns can help to overcome misunderstandings and miscommunications that may be contributing to exaggerated or misdirected expectations and the need to be perfect in all efforts.

An interesting topic for discussion during the parent-included counseling time is inheritability of giftedness. The goal of the educational consultant is to achieve understanding, respect, awareness, and support of goals. The nature-nurture debate is always lively. A great many concerns may be opened for discussion with individuals searching for who they are and why they are

the way they are, including genetic contributors and the environmental influence. The consultant can contribute factual information regarding the debate. This task will not be easy, based on the wide range of studies conducted in numerous different ways. Even if the issues of sample and method could be overcome, there are still differences in analyzing and interpreting the data (Tremblay & Gagne, 2001).

4. Friends who really understand us are few and far between

Gifted children function well independently, but most children and adults need the emotional support and joy provided by friendship. There are several hurdles for the gifted child to overcome in finding friends. Many of them are covered in "The Eight Great Gripses." Friendship is usually found among peers, and it is difficult for the gifted child to find peers with whom there is also the emotional attachment of friendship. It is important for the family to understand the child's difficulty. Nothing is more hurtful than a parent's questioning children as to why they do not have friends or why they do not bring anyone home. It is important to address the issue of locating peers and opportunities to engage in activities interesting to gifted or like-minded individuals. It is also vital that the family understand the importance of this issue and their role in resolving it. Discussing the various aspects of this issue would be an appropriate topic when working through the family expectations issues of Gripe #3.

The child, the educational consultant, and the parent/family must work together on this one. As an example, it may be difficult for a seventeen-year-old to accept or be comfortable with the idea that a ten-year-old might be a peer in a discussion of astronomy (or physics, or ecology, etc.). Among solutions that adults can facilitate and encourage are after-school clubs based on specific interests. Other possibilities include interest in a sport, museum classes, or scouting. The educational consultant should provide suggestions and direction to tap into these resources. The key in seeking such solutions is looking for genuine interests on the part of the child, or potential for growth, keeping in mind that the gifted child may find usual recreational activities for his/her age peer group off-putting.

Many rural and urban settings do not have these kinds of resources available. This circumstance should prompt the examination of alternative activities, such as a computer community, pen pal, or online reading club. Any activities with an online component should be closely monitored by the supervising adult. Gifted children are curious, and their asynchronous development makes them vulnerable to those with more sophisticated outlooks. An additional alternative to meeting the gifted child's social needs is to develop an activity. Suggestions for these areas might include starting a scout or 4-H group, posting a sign at church for a special interest group focused on the child's area of interest, or a book club. A mentoring component could be introduced by having guest speakers, or webcasts or podcasts if the area is remote. It could also be a club for the sole purpose of social interaction; think cupcakes, punch, and a movie.

The search for connection begins in early childhood for gifted individuals (Harrison, 2004). Leta Hollingworth believed the years between four and nine are when a child establishes personal identity (Klein, 2000). This is problematic for gifted children who experience difficulty, particularly at this period, finding children with whom they can develop peer relationships.

5. Kids tease us about being smart

There are two aspects to this problem, in terms of developing a resolution. The first issue is knowing that making fun of a child or tormenting them is a form of bullying. Bullying should be treated as a very real problem, and schools should implement a zero tolerance policy. All students should feel safe. Schools should embrace the position taken by Rabbi Hillel: "If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I? And if not now, when?" In this instance, everyone should see themselves as part of the same community, regardless of talents, skills, gifts, or levels of authority. The educational consultant should make this recommendation, with suggestions for implementation, if a school has not yet addressed this issue.

The second aspect of this issue is finding ways to unify the student-body of the school, or the setting in which the child experiences taunting behavior. School-wide education is helpful in addressing the perceived problems of separatism and favoritism. This educational process could occur with the implementation of the zero tolerance policy. Overcoming these issues could be managed through consistent modeling and a true sense of fairness. The students should be encouraged to see everyone's individual accomplishments, including their own, and experience collective pride. This attitude must be modeled by administration. Seminars should be conducted for faculty, parents, and community. Faculty must model this attitude, and enforcement at the faculty level must be required. All students should feel safe in school, and teachers must be part of the effort for it to be successful. In one study of perceptions, people seemed to view gifted individuals as having the same traits as anyone else, simply able to complete work faster and/or better (Bain, Choate, & Bliss, 2005). If correct, these results indicate that the public expects gifted individuals to behave as everyone else does, differing only in performance areas. This is the basis for misunderstandings and misinterpretations of behavior. A gifted child's interest in reading while everyone else is playing, for

example, may be interpreted as rejection of the children who are playing. In working with gifted students, the educational consultant should help them reach an understanding of how others might perceive certain behaviors and choices.

Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration can be applied to this situation. In working with gifted students, educational consultants should allow them to push the limits of their ability to think, and to imagine. The real and the ideal do merge and reflect the values of the individual by what his/her vision of "ideal" is (Piirto, 2005). Accepting "reality" at its most superficial level is a limiting approach and fails to apply an ideal interpretation of the situation. Perceived teasing or noting a child's intellectual giftedness may be a form of homage. The dreaded "isolation" may be of the child's making, rather than reflecting the circumstances of the experience. It is important that gifted students are equipped to deal with others' behaviors such as teasing. If not, they will have failed to grow from their experiences and will have relinquished locus of control.

6. We feel overwhelmed by the number of things we can do in life

Career and educational counseling, tailored to their unique needs, must be made available to gifted students. If there is no one to fill this role at the school, the gifted teacher should assume this responsibility. If there is an absence of training to fill this role, an educational consultant can assist in developing understanding, as well as offering a list of resources. Part of the consultant's role can include providing a website that directs teachers and parents to various resources and links.

The many areas of giftedness lead to each individual having the potential for multiple areas from which to seek a career or life's work. Multipotentiality is an issue of giftedness that is often dismissed as someone complaining about a wealth of richness. However, if viewed through the perspective of highly sensitive children or young people who often have a need to be productive and make use of their gifts, multipotentiality is indeed overwhelming. Without proper, caring direction, the child may never choose a direction, and may live an aimless life, through lack of parents' and/or teachers' acceptance of the dilemma or willingness to offer counsel. Kerr and Fisher (1997) noted that failing to respond to the issues raised by multipotentiality and undifferentiated interest development can prove to be a significant barrier in the decision-making process and development of appropriate career goals (Cited in Swanson & Parcover, 2000). An additional aspect of this problem is the need to break free from traditional expectations during the decision-making process with encouragement to pursue a goal based on passion.

Employing appropriate assessment methods to determine a student's areas of talent and interests is helpful in neutralizing a sense of being overwhelmed by the "gift" of potential. The consultant can advise on appropriate methods, along with guidelines for administering the various assessments and scales to gain this important information for the next step in the career/educational counseling/advising process.

In a study of values, self-respect was identified as being necessary to progress in life (Piirto, 2005). Self-respect plays a key role in positive decision-making regarding career, education, personal relationships, and belief in self. Belief in one's ability to set goals, and achieve them, will help the gifted student overcome the tendency to be overwhelmed at the possibilities available to him/her.

7. We feel different and alienated

An important step to achieve in working with gifted children and young people is to accept the term "different" as referring to being outside of the norm, but not negative. To tell a gifted student he/she is not different is rather disingenuous and places your credibility in question. Understanding the value of being different, and that everyone is unique and different, shifts the emphasis on "being different." The ways in which all gifted are different can be understood as a compulsion to seek and know. Seeing this trait is part of giftedness places it in the same category as having brown eyes or an overbite. It is much less overwhelming to feel different in the way we are all different from one another rather than feeling different as a Martian might feel during the initial Earth visit.

There are aspects of giftedness that contribute to the gifted individual's feelings of isolation and alienation. By viewing giftedness as the mirror image of intellectual impairment, with both occurring at opposite ends of the same spectrum, we can view information used to identify, diagnose, and provide interventions in a new way (Silverman, 1998). If gifted children can understand that they share traits and behaviors with others who are gifted, their feelings of being different and alienated can also be understood in a new way, showing them that they have peers, just a smaller number.

There have been debates regarding the rapid development of intellects in gifted children, as well as the degree of development. The debates concern whether this intellectual development is a point of strength or vulnerability (Preuss & Dubow, 2004). Comparisons of coping responses in children identified as intellectually gifted and the general student populations are inconclusive, but suggest gifted children have self-esteem and adjustment issues, with the exception of academic esteem (Norman, Ramsay, Martray, & Roberts, 1999). There is evidence to support the idea that children in both groups respond

differently to certain stressors. How one handles situations in life results in a qualitatively different experience. This provides another example of a gifted child's correct assessment of feeling different. The educational consultant should work with the child on this "gripe," as well as Gripe #1 (No one explains what being gifted is all about) and Gripe #3 (Parents, teachers, and friends expect us to be perfect all the time) to achieve an understanding of giftedness and its impact on the life of a gifted individual.

8. We worry about world problems and feel helpless to do anything about them

One of the traits common to gifted children is a hyperawareness and concern for the conditions of the world and the suffering of others. There is evidence to support issue awareness and understanding occurring in gifted children without their having had greater access than other children to information regarding these topics (Von Karolyi, 2006). There is also evidence that some gifted children are more spiritually sensitive and concerned with the spiritual nature of issues (Lovecky, 1998).

Awareness and understanding of moral and world dilemmas and the consequent pain caused by these conditions are difficult for a sensitive, capable individual. Gifted children are aware and possess the ability to respond to these types of situations, but they are still children. Conflicting feelings of responsibility and helplessness often result in depression and inappropriate behavior, such as "acting out." These conditions may place a gifted student "at risk" for dropping out of school. The Personal Development Test (PDT) was developed to identify "at risk" students, so that intervention could be applied to change these students' direction in life. It also provides a reliable indication of honesty, giftedness, and personal development (Cassel, 2003). These traits also support the emotions that drive the need to right wrongs. By understanding these traits as part of a profile of giftedness, an educational consultant can appreciate the motivation behind this need and the frustration of being unable to make a significant change.

Values are the basis of beliefs that predict actions (Piirto, 2005). Gifted students should be encouraged to develop values based on personal observations and experience. It is important that children's values be allowed to evolve from the values they learned in their home, school, church, and community settings. These initial beliefs are not wrong, but gifted students must be given the freedom to examine their beliefs and question the basis for them. This will strengthen their beliefs and remove the confusion that may result from a gifted individual's holding beliefs that belong to someone else. The issue of values should be an area of dialog between the student and the educational consultant, and the consultant should be prepared to provide some direction in areas with which the child struggles.

Productiveness is an important quality that can help gifted students feel a sense of capability and accomplishment. An important similarity observed in giftedness associated with productiveness is motivation. It may be a desire to change things or a desire to control destiny, but desire and motivation are foundations for productiveness (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2000). This topic bears further examination. It is a mystery and one that results in the loss of application of talent. While it is not intended to under-value thought in its pure form, productivity and effecting changes in the world are the basis of this "gripe." Engaging the gifted child in a discussion on this topic can serve to help them verbalize feelings of not being able to make a difference and can help them formulate their ideas regarding feelings of being unable or incapable of productive action.

The practical side of responding to this frustration is to incorporate it into career counseling. Discussions on ways to resolve world issues can uncover a student's passion can provide direction in determining career goals, as well as an appropriate course of study.

Conclusion

In developing a framework for a consultative practice to support individual gifted education, the educational consultant must analyze personal feelings of perceptions and attitudes toward gifted students. This analysis will help identify and correct any negativity that has worked its way into the psyche. It is also important to identify perceptions of the public regarding gifted education (Bain, Choate, & Bliss, 2006). This knowledge can prepare the consultant for bias and misinformation when working with the parents and faculty members. It is necessary to understand and accept that the perceptions may be based on misinformation, yet still reflect the way a portion of the population thinks.

Dalzell notes the many developmental influences on the gifted child, making it important that psychologists, educators, and parents consider the specific needs of these children (1998). It is difficult, based on training needs and budget constraints, for every school to have an individual dedicated to working with gifted students. Such a person would be invaluable to the gifted education structure, but may not be possible. The addition of an educational consultant provides a viable alternative. An educational consultant can work with administration on a school level to recommend identification processes, programs, and structures to develop an effective, responsive gifted program. The community population and the district/school budget will be factors in developing a gifted program. These factors should be viewed as considerations, not limitations. If there are budgetary

constraints, the consultant should direct administrators to grant opportunities. If the school does not have an adequate number of gifted students to justify the need for a gifted program, there may be identification and assessment issues to be addressed.

On the individual level, an educational consultant serves as a resource and guide to determining the best course for each individual child. There are practical considerations to this process as well, but these, too, should be viewed as considerations. It is the goal and the duty of the educational consultant to have a bank of resources from which to draw ideas and alternatives. School is only part of a child's academic experience. High expectations and stimulation with caring and support in the home and school also contribute to the child's growth and development (Dalzell, 1998). It is important that the consultant view the circumstances of each child as a riddle to be solved. Some of the solutions may not be obvious, but there is a way to elevate each child's opportunities in life. The key to that door is an appropriate education and a strong sense of self. Experts committed to the field of gifted education stress the value and necessity of gifted children's having a sense of who they are, what their values are, their strengths and weaknesses, what they can do, and what they want to do.

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