

From the Founders:

Where To From Here? Searching for Some Upside Amidst Many Downs

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Just a few months ago, our personal and professional lives – like the lives of so many others worldwide – were turned topsy-turvy by the deadly, fast-spreading COVID-19. A little behind schedule, we had been planning to go to press with this issue of IJTDC early in 2020, when suddenly the novel coronavirus hit and began dominating conversation and headlines virtually everywhere. Just like that, the pandemic was upon us; it was as if one day we awoke to find that our social landscape had been totally reinvented. Since the ramifications were almost unimaginably significant, it seemed best for us to hold off, take a pause, and adjust to the life-changes that so suddenly and profoundly impacted millions of people around the globe.

Adapting to a changed world order

“New normal” has arisen as the most common descriptor of the present situation. And in many ways, that term succinctly captures our recently reshaped reality. On the other hand, although it highlights our current altered condition, to us the label suggests a too-permanent state of affairs, almost implying that our short-term reactions will become irrevocably entrenched as part of the world taken for granted. Some of the recent changes in lifestyle will naturally be with us for a long, long while, but many newly created others will soon simply end up disappearing or being substantially re-modified.

Put another way, to describe our present state of affairs as the “new normal” is not precisely accurate, for at present we are part of an evolving, yet-to-be-determined normal. Certainly, the situation is disconcertingly disruptive and grave, what with the threats on two interconnected fronts: public health and economic. Tragically, many people have lost their lives; many their livelihoods. And it goes without saying there have been other unfortunate secondary consequences and spin-offs. However, as we search for equilibrium during the inevitable and painful societal shifts, there are emerging opportunities. Yes, even during all the chaotic devastation and loss, we can be proactive, balanced, and innovative. Indeed, we can plan – at least to some extent – for the coming exponential changes and affect them for the better.

Technology to the fore

It would be wrong to discount the fact that some of the recent changes have been positive. In keeping with response efforts in most universities across the land, we at the University of Winnipeg (UW) have attempted to level the COVID-19 curve by encouraging washing and sanitizing (of hands and objects), observing social distancing, and offering the bulk of our courses remotely. Technologically speaking, online alternative applications – such as Adobe Connect and Desire to Learn – are now playing a prominent part in online

teaching and learning. UW and many other institutions have gone with Zoom as the approach of choice. In what amounted to a baptism by fire for most of the faculty, a large proportion of our instructors discovered their latent inner-techie and how to conduct online classes much more productively than before. It was also surprising for many of us to find that we could make the online class atmosphere far more interactive than we had initially expected. In very real ways, dimensions of our teaching have been refined and enhanced. So, hats off to Zoom, Adobe Connect, Desire to Learn, Cisco, webinars, and other useful platforms; they have helped us react in a meaningful manner, improved course design and delivery, and – in the short run – saved the day for universities and public schools during the pandemic (even preserving the school year, and graduation, for a lot of students). And clearly, by far and away the majority of post-secondary courses will continue to be delivered remotely for quite some time. Further, now that its vast potential is being discovered by an ever-expanding audience, online instruction will surely play a permanent part – in hybrid-type fashion – in our classrooms of the future.

Nonetheless, as most sophisticated scholars in the field seem to agree, technology was not designed to be, nor is it about to become, a long-term replacement for in-person teaching – the flagship of our pedagogical armada. Said simply, teaching vis-à-vis allows sensitive educators to gain an unparalleled view of what is going on in the classroom: Who is grasping the material? Who is struggling? Who is excelling? Who is reluctant? Who is daydreaming? Who is troubled? Who is bullying (and who is a victim of it)? Who is exuberant? Who is shy? Who is interacting with whom? etcetera, etcetera, ad infinitum. While technology gives us the flexibility to adapt instructional methods to better fit our purpose and makes things possible that were not possible before, it shouldn't be driving the educational bus – teaching, at its core, is a people enterprise.

In our opinion, we should go down the technological road in a positive frame of mind, but with caution. In a presentation on the pluses and minuses of technology, a past Manitoba Deputy Minister of Education observed that while one might truly savour the first half-bottle of wine, it may not always be wise to immediately polish off the second half. Likewise, instruments of change must be employed sensibly and controlled, not recklessly overused (Farthing, 2015). Still at the novelty stage, some of us are now probably dipping into the bottom half of the bottle and calling more Zoom meetings than we really need. Perhaps then, certain Zoom-aholics ought to resist the allure of the new tool, and show a bit more restraint.

And the danger of technology goes far beyond mere overuse – there is a real threat lurking in the background. Hacking, phishing, and identity theft that often go far beyond annoying are likely to increase in the wake of COVID-19. Even when it seems innocuous, there is a need to remain vigilant. To illustrate, for years media scholars have apparently warned, “if the product is free, chances are the commodity is you” (Flisfeder, 2020, p. A7).

Anyway, a year or so ago, a few of us at UW retired our computers part-time (i.e., we refrained from booting them up on two working days per week). Hearing this news, one of our colleagues asked, “My goodness, whatever do you do???” Well actually, besides working the old-fashioned pen-and-paper way, we did people things: We visited around with other faculty members, discussed research (and other topics) over coffee, played racquetball, and made time for walks with grandchildren (who christened these interludes “walkie-talkies”). And here's the piece de résistance – we would often just recline in our chairs and think! It was liberating, and we felt the better for it. Our pre-pandemic routine has been partially disrupted by COVID-19, but we intend to get fully back on track as soon as possible. And even now, our computers remain off those two days each week.

Relationships

Say what you will, the essence of teaching is interpersonal interaction. One can engage with learners in different ways and formats, but to our minds face-to-face trumps remote instruction most of the time. Subtle nonverbal cues and connections play a huge role in communication between teachers and students, and likely account in large part for the sixth-sense “intuition” that defines sensitive educators across the spectrum. A critical tool that enriches the educational process, technology can supplement and complement direct person-to-person interaction in wonderful ways. That said, to drift too far away from the essence of firsthand human contact and connectedness is to diminish the sacred art of teaching. It is understood that part of the traditional learning experience we are talking about for children includes peer relationships, social networking (in person, not always by electronic devices), and play (not just video games). When it is safe for all concerned, teachers at every level must strive to retrieve the in-person ingredient that has, of necessity, been put temporarily on the back burner.

After all, it’s not just about information and knowledge – the human element and relationships are a big part of life itself. In developing our mentoring programmes at UW, Alan Wiebe (2013) has injected relationship-building into the mix. He described the rationale in this way:

We’ve all heard realtors shout about the virtue of ‘Location, Location, Location’ when discussing what is important in the sale of a home or business. I would venture to say that in our field, the emphasis on the new 3Rs – ‘Relationships, Relationships, Relationships’ – sets the stage for exciting and positive outcomes in the schools. Teachers-to-be can learn to develop and nurture meaningful relationships with young people through the dynamic experience of being mentors to disconnected individuals. (p. 98)

Obviously, establishing human relationships is at the heart of working with marginalized, disenfranchised populations. It has even been written that, in attempting to reach and teach troubled children and youth, the “Relationships ... are the intervention” (Gharabaghi, 2008, p. 31). And make no mistake, it’s not just an early years or adolescent thing – although relationships may manifest themselves differently across the life span, they matter at every stage of our existence.

Servant leadership and service learning

Vigilance must go far beyond technology. It is wise to beware of well-meaning individuals who think they know what is best for the rest of us, for often they lead naïve or uninformed followers down perilous paths. They may mean well, but we should remember the old adages, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions,” and “Believing passionately that something is true does not necessarily make it so.”

In other cases, leadership motives are far from benign. Influential corporate CEOs, ambitious politicians, and ideologues of various stripes are frequently driven by the profit motive, the need for power or attention, and rigid “isms” rather than flexible reason. All too often, there is no light at the end of their self-centred tunnel vision.

It was inevitable: With the advent of the coronavirus came unscrupulous, profiteering, opportunistic, new-version carpetbaggers looking to score a pandemic bonanza. And more are on the way, chasing the almighty dollar with a vengeance. Businesses and financial institutions of various types have bombarded us with COVID-19 catchphrases such as, “We

are all in this together.” Sometimes it’s true; sometimes not so much. To really reach out and help means giving or doing something tangible, something that often involves personal or corporate sacrifice. True altruism requires more than made-to-look-good slogans or jingles. It does not mean getting rich or benefitting from the misfortunes of others. It does mean giving of one’s time and energy and putting people before profit (e.g., donating a portion of massive reserve funds to assist those catapulted suddenly into desperate straits, forgiving rent or loan payments, or cutting obscene, usurious interest rates). Rather than hiding behind a façade of altruism, genuine giving demonstrates an authentic desire to help, to share, and to move ahead in a spirit of partnership.

Robert Greenleaf (1998, 2002) was an eloquent advocate for “servant leadership.” In his compelling writings, he argued that people should first serve others before taking on a leadership role themselves, and that leaders should have a deep-rooted commitment to social and personal responsibility, to altruism, and to real selflessness. From his people-focused perspective, true leaders must place the wishes and needs of others above their own. At times, Greenleaf seemed almost to advocate for what some would suggest is civil disobedience: Don’t become a leader for the wrong reasons – power, attention, or money; and don’t blindly follow leaders who are governed by the wrong motives – power, attention, or money.

Hand-in-hand with servant leadership comes “service learning,” where young people have the opportunity to become involved in significant, real-life activities and projects. Through direct participation, they experience the impact of social responsibility, the meaning of citizenship, and the joy of serving others. Many educators, ourselves included, believe that it is important for students – from kindergarten through graduate school – to learn about values, morality, and ethics (Ambrose & Cross, 2009). Ben Franklin would have concurred. In his words, “It is a grand mistake to think of being great without goodness” (https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/benjamin_franklin_109066).

An abundance of service project possibilities are available through programmes such as the Community Problem Solving component of the Future Problem Solving Program International (<https://www.fpspi.org>). Also, a substantial amount of literature, including the work of Larry Brendtro and his colleagues, highlights the value of service learning activities in empowering talented at-risk children and youth (Brendtro & du Toit, 2005; Brendtro, Mitchell, Freado, & du Toit, 2012; Brendtro & Shahbazian, 2004). Albert Schweitzer summed it up well: “I don’t know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve” (https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/albert_schweitzer_133001).

Gifted students and the pandemic

Of late, the two of us have spent a fair amount of time thinking about how the education of many young people has been unceremoniously disrupted in some way or another by the coronavirus. Teachers are doing some amazing work to adapt and keep things on an even keel, but there can be no doubt that – despite online apps, home tutoring, and a variety of innovative strategies – multitudes of kids are having a tough go of it. Although it is imperative that safety precautions be followed, isolation, limited play opportunities with peers, bothersome masking, and so on are bound to take a toll on children socially and academically.

Given our specialty area, it will come as no surprise to learn that we, along with several colleagues, began wondering what the implications of COVID-19 might be for gifted

and talented children. For years, professionals in the field have argued G/T students are overlooked and underserved within the school system, to the point that their talents often remain unnoticed, unnurtured, and underdeveloped. The arrival of the coronavirus has introduced a heavy-duty complication, in that – in this new context – there is now a growing possibility many gifted students will be largely forgotten yet again ... twice invisible, as it were. If we don't want their bountiful potential to be left largely unfulfilled, it is time to make sure no children – including those of high ability – are lost in the shuffle.

Stepping up to the plate

In numerous countries throughout the world, committed professionals have developed programs, created centres, and founded organizations to support gifted children, their parents, and their teachers. The focus varies from place to place, of course, such that – fortuitously – many areas of gifted theory and practice are thoroughly researched, assessed, and evaluated on an ongoing basis. At the International Centre for Innovation in Education (ICIE) and Lost Prizes International (LPI), our teams have been able to partner with a number of influential, altruistically driven national and international organizations, including the International Higher Education Teaching and Learning Association (HETL), Maple Bear Global Schools (MBGS), Minority Achievement, Creativity, and High Ability Center (MACH III), and Reclaiming Youth At Risk, among others. As many of us in the gifted/talented sphere know, these well-established bodies do exceptional work, sponsoring major conferences on a regular basis, offering recognized courses and training programmes, providing service delivery projects for children and youth, and publishing and disseminating newsletters, professional journals, books, and curriculum packages.

In gifted education, creative and critical thinking, innovation, enriched curriculum, and leadership are front and centre. Practitioners in the discipline are uniquely equipped to lend a hand in these tumultuous times, for they tend to have both theoretical background and in-the-trenches experience in terms of enhancing the educational environment (within and beyond the school), identifying and nurturing student talents, and programming for exceptionally bright young people. By definition of their skill set, educators in the gifted domain are positioned to offer a lot to students, parents, teachers, administrators, researchers, and government officials. Primarily, during these trying days they can help ensure talented, high-ability students do not get lost in the aftermath of the pandemic's onslaught.

There can be no doubt that the gifted movement has accomplished many things in many places. A wealth of collaboration among individuals, school districts, post-secondary institutions, and regional, national, and international organizations from countries far and wide has yielded impressive results. It seems to us, however, that now would be a good time for those of us in the gifted realm to up the ante another notch by zeroing in still more on responding to the pandemic dilemma, reaching out even further within and across disciplines, sharing what we have learned, envisioning possibilities, becoming part of the problem-solving process, generating ideas and responses to relevant issues, increasing already significant advocacy, and finding new ways to make a tangible difference in the present and post-pandemic world.

At our personal, micro-world level, the two of us – with noteworthy assistance from our families – are currently working to provide meaningful local programmes for young people who are dealing with social and educational disruptions due to the coronavirus. In fact, as soon as time permits, ICIE plans to produce a teaching video that will describe an

array of activities created by family members – educators all – who volunteered to take charge and move these initiatives forward. Our hope is that the activities (e.g., Puppet Shows on the Street Corner, Cat Choirs on Video, Preparing and Distributing School Supplies and Materials in Food Hampers, How to Get Our Teacher Ready Online for the School Day, Using Skits to Teach, Quilting Star Blankets in Person and Remotely, Working Online with Adolescents to Prepare for the Post-Secondary Experience, “Advising” Webinars to Guide and Mentor Incoming International Students, Providing Remote Tutorial Support from Education Students for Sequestered Children and Youth, etc.) will serve as models to encourage in-service teachers and help them with idea generation and programme implementation.

Of course, it is much more complicated to connect at our macro-world level, where – in an effort to globally mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on high-ability students – organizations (or more accurately, individuals and groups within organizations) may take aim at strengthening existing partnerships and establishing new ones. Considering the talent on display in our professional bodies, such a goal is eminently attainable. The fact that most scholars in the discipline belong to one or more major gifted organizations (and that large numbers have served and/or are serving in leadership positions) provides us with a golden opportunity to collaborate effectively. Given that many research and service delivery projects are currently underway, the immediate challenge is to seize the moment and build upon what is already happening. And as Ambrose (2015) has so convincingly pointed out, a concomitant goal would be for those of us in gifted education to break down barriers and broaden our scope by increasing – in true interdisciplinary fashion – our partnerships with experts from other fields.

From where we stand, then, it would seem to be virtually obligatory for more gifted educators to mobilize and focus their energy and abilities on supporting schools, teachers, and those high-ability students profoundly affected by the coronavirus. Certainly, an increasing number of programmes should target gifted young people whose needs are being left unmet due to the impact of COVID-19. A major part of our mission is to design “front-line service delivery interventions to reach and redirect disenfranchised students ... to carry out action research in the best sense of the term by gathering data, measuring and evaluating results objectively, following up, and adjusting as appropriate ... [and] to engage and make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged individuals” (McCluskey, Treffinger, Baker, & Wiebe, 2016, p. 4).

As we continue to grapple with the coronavirus, more and more gifted educators with a strong sense of social responsibility will, we are sure, step forward as true servant leaders, give of themselves altruistically, and help in meaningful ways. That is what they do. A large share of the interventions will require long-term commitment, for while this virus may subside soon, a second wave appears probable; and in any case, hanging over our heads like a virulent sword of Damocles is the fact that yet unknown “plagues” are likely to be born and take root in the future.

We must be better prepared than we were this time. Our teams at ICIE and LPI would be more than willing to discuss possibilities with interested parties. Essentially, we will do our best to pull our weight by maintaining older successful services and programmes, and adapting and developing new ones to fit the times. Should anyone have specific ideas for building partnerships in this regard, feel free to get in touch.

Standing on the shoulders of giants

Before presenting an update on current ICIE and LPI programmes, we'd like to pay our respects to four giants of gifted education, who have passed away recently. All of these eminent scholars have profoundly influenced almost everyone in the discipline:

- **James T. Webb** (July 27, 2018) was known for his work in many areas of giftedness, most notably the social and emotional needs of exceptionally able, talented individuals. He was a prolific author, and the founder of Great Potential Press and SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted).
- **George Betts** (August 5, 2019) made many contributions to gifted theory and practice, including Senior Seminar – an away-from-school experiential project; the Summer Enrichment Program – a residential camp for gifted children; and the well-known, widely implemented Autonomous Learning Model.
- **Don Treffinger** (October 16, 2019) is celebrated for his work in creative problem solving, mentoring, self-directed learning, and problem-solving style, all of which figured prominently in our projects at LPI. If not for Don's knowledge and vision, there would be no Lost Prizes; his passing left his UW colleagues bereft.
- **Franz Mönks** (March 11, 2020) – a previous Vice President of the WCGTC and a former President, Honorary President, and driving force behind ECHA – was the first Chair in Psychology and Pedagogy of the Gifted in Europe and the founder of the Specialist in Gifted Education training programme.

Conferences

Unfortunately, like elsewhere, the pandemic has played havoc with our scheduled conferences, forcing many modifications and a postponement. Here's where we stand at the moment.

The 8th Annual Lost Prizes-ICIE Seminars

The University of Winnipeg

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

www.uwinnipeg.ca/lostprizes

In light of current realities, the 2020 Lost Prizes event is going virtual at the University of Winnipeg, with the Seminars set to take place from July 6-8, 2020, and the various Conference-Connected Courses running July 2-4 and July 9-11. Initially, since certain classes could not be delivered in a remote format and we were uncertain about enrolment projections, we cancelled two of our six courses. Early in the registration process, however, it became clear that the demand was heavy: The four classes filled in short order and we were flooded with emails from in-service teachers still trying to register. As a consequence, we replaced the two sections that had been removed (by having two instructors repeat their offerings) and increased course caps to 50 (leaving us with no empty seats and the highest turnout in the Seminars' eight years). After all was said and done, going virtual freed up space restrictions and allowed us to increase the number of participants. Now we look forward ("sorta") to problem solving through this new format to deliver an engaging and meaningful conference.

Dania El Chaar, Marc Freado, and Steve Van Bockern will be presenting keynote addresses highlighting talent development and, along with Ken McCluskey, teaching the following courses: Culturally Responsive Teaching, Kid Whispering, Risk and Resilience, and Expanding Gifted Education respectively. It's exciting for us to welcome back these talented speakers.

This year's conference workshops will consist of a series of webinars highlighting intervention and engagement strategies for youth, encouraging practices and programme development for educators, and research from Immigration Partnership Winnipeg. The days are long (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), so there will be yoga and Zumba breaks for participants who feel the need to move.

Rest assured, we expect there will be plenty of pickup when the in-service teachers start sharing information about designing activities for talented, pandemic-affected children. Look for a lot of networking, innovation, and doable projects to come out of the discussion.

Next year's 9th Annual 2021 Lost Prizes-ICIE Seminars will take place, as always, at UW in early July. The plan is to reactivate a strong in-person component if possible, but we'll have to see how the virus situation unfolds as the event draws nearer. Top of the list for 2021 will be rescheduling the DOT (Designing Our Tomorrow) sessions that had to be postponed this time around. DOT is a hands-on programme developed by faculty at Cambridge University (Ian Hosking in Engineering and Bill Nicholl from Education). Based on the concept of "empathic engineering," it incorporates real-world problem solving, a talent development element for at-risk students, and altruistic service learning projects in an appealing, authentic format. With DOT, it will be possible to create learning activities designed by and for students and teachers grappling with the effects of the pandemic.

Our goal is to maintain the essence of Lost Prizes by returning to our earlier preferred approach, but if we can't make it happen in that form, we'll keep calm, adjust, and do the best we can. In the end, what will be will be. (Fritz Perls would have said in his serene manner, If not; then not.)

***The 18th ICIE 2021 International Conference on Excellence, Innovation, & Creativity in
Basic Higher Education & Psychology: Latest Developments in Research & Practice
Helsinki, Finland***

www.icieconference.net

This conference was originally set for this July in 2020, but it had to be postponed and rescheduled because of COVID-19. The planning remains fluid, but now our goal is to hold the event in Helsinki, Finland on July 5-9, 2021. The conference is a partnership between ICIE, Helsinki University, the University of Winnipeg, and the International Higher Education Teaching and Learning Association.

As always, we have many renowned keynote speakers: Don Ambrose, Patrick Blessinger, Christine Boyko-Head, Nicholas Colangelo, Frédéric Darbellay, Lucy Davies, Eve Eisenschmidt, Vlad Glaveanu, Jacques Grégoire, Minna Huotilainen, Karen Magro, Andrea McCluskey, Ken McCluskey, Douglas Newton, Lynn Newton, Roland S. Persson, Henry Tirri, Auli Toom, Rachel Simpson, and Manfred Spitzer. The conference will also feature 32 mini workshops, 12 symposia, and a large number of parallel and poster sessions.

UW-ICIE International Symposium
Regifting the Gifted: Innovation, Education, & Giftedness in the 21st Century
Helsinki, Finland

This symposium, tentatively scheduled for July 26-30, 2021, is being offered to facilitate networking among like-minded researchers and teachers from the gifted sector worldwide who are interested in collaborating to design and implement programmes for talented, at-risk students, their families, and their teachers caught up in the coronavirus furor. Aside from the overriding COVID-19 theme, we are toying with the idea of framing sessions around other possible categories such as Networking and International Projects, Paradigm Shifts in Gifted Education, Innovation Education and Teaching for Productive Thinking, Talent Management, Capacity Building and Professional Development, Creative and Critical Thinking in Program Design, and e-Learning and Virtual Environments. The expected outcome is that scholars from diverse backgrounds will come together to form working groups bent on designing and putting into place concrete programmes to ease the pandemic situation for the target groups in question.

At this point, the event is definitely not set in stone, for there are many variables to consider. Again, there is a need to be flexible and, if things don't come together due to outside circumstances, to rework and reformulate as necessary.

Publications in 2020

We continue to labour intensively on the publishing side of our operations.

ICIE books and monographs

The following array of ICIE books and monographs will be released shortly:

- *Providing Students with Creative Spaces: The Power of Edutainment*
Maher Bahloul
- *Focusing on Strengths and Talents: Using Enrichment Pedagogy to Challenge and Engage 2E Students*
Susan Baum & Sally M. Reis
- *21st Century Skills: Powerful Teaching with Cooperative Learning*
Ludger Bruening & Tobias Saum
- *A Call to Action: The Urgency of Cultural Competency Training for Teachers Working with Racially Diverse Gifted Students*
Joy Lawson Davis
- *Gifted Workers Hitting the Target*
Noks Nauta & Sieuwke Ronner. Translated into Arabic by Taisir Subhi Yamin; and Illustrated by Ingrid Joustra.
- *Educating the Gifted: An Opportunity for Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Classrooms*
Heinz Neber
- *Ambitious Humanity: The Uses and Abuses of Competing*
Roland S Persson

Books by UW faculty members, including volumes on ADHD and mentoring, are still in preparation (and will take their place in the production line once the authors have put the finishing touches on the texts).

IJTDC

Anyone who has done it understands how difficult it is to produce an academic journal. The *International Journal for Talent Development and Creativity* (IJTDC) – a joint initiative of ICIE and UW – is no exception, for it has taken an enormous amount of work (especially this issue, since most of our usual support people were consumed by other urgent matters).

Had it not been for the tireless work done by Karen Magro, IJTDC's Editor-in-Chief, this volume would never have seen the light of day. It is only right, then, that the two of us take a moment to formally acknowledge and express our thanks to Karen, who has been a virtual one-woman show on several projects of late. Her scholarship, work ethic, and genuine caring have proven invaluable in this undertaking – truly, it wouldn't have happened without her.

UW Faculty of Education publishing

In 2019 and thus far in 2020, we have held back from publishing more books at UW, choosing instead to focus on the reprinting and distribution of two of our very successful 2018 publications: *The Three Pillars of Transforming Care: Trauma and Resilience in the Other 23 Hours* (by Howard Bath, former Northern Territory Children's Commissioner in Australia, and John Sieta, Michigan State University); and *Schools that Matter: Teaching the Mind, Reaching the Heart* (by Steve Van Bockern, Augustana University, South Dakota). However, we do have some intriguing publications in process, which we hope to position at the head of the cue very shortly.

ICIE Professional Certificate in Excellence & Gifted Education

Professional development is a critical factor in the initial success of the teaching/learning process. The quality and intensity of training programmes play an important role in determining how successful teachers will be, as well as how long they remain in the profession. ICIE has developed a rigorous programme designed to provide participants an optimum combination of experiences in which they can build content area background, knowledge of teaching and learning, and the competencies required to be a successful and effective teacher for all students, including those who are gifted, creative, and talented.

During 2019, ICIE has conducted a large number of training workshops in Bosnia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Jordan, Oman, Serbia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and other countries. Similarly, in 2020, the intent of ICIE is – if possible – to have different programmes relating to excellence and gifted education in Croatia, the State of Qatar; United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and elsewhere.

The ICIE Olympiad

www.icie-olympiad.net

This *Olympiad* has been developed to provide international recognition for outstanding achievements by in-service teachers, graduate and undergraduate university

students, and 7th-12th graders. It will attract a large number of participants from different parts of the world.

At annual *Olympiads*, both teachers and students will compete in events that focus on applied topics and challenges emphasizing teamwork and interdisciplinary approaches to productive thinking (e.g., creative and critical thinking, creative problem solving, future problem solving, cooperation/collaboration, and communication).

The *Olympiad* is affiliated with the International Centre for Innovation in Education and a number of other international institutions. The site is owned and operated by ICIE. Importantly, the *Olympiad* is based on international standards for excellence, creativity, and innovation. Winners of the competitions will be invited to regional, national, and international tournaments, which are rotated throughout different countries.

An ambitious international initiative, the *Olympiad* is dependent on a large number of dedicated volunteers across the world, who offer their expertise, time, and resources to support and promote excellence, creativity, and innovation. All people involved in this programme are responsible for ensuring that any applicable policies, laws, or regulations are not broken. Every participant, everyone who is part of the *Olympiad*, should display honesty, integrity, courtesy, respect, and accept safety procedures and codes of ethics.

In closing

This has ended up being a rather idealistic, convoluted call to arms, but we do feel strongly about finding ways to assist people in many countries who have – through no fault of their own – fallen upon hard times. It will be a challenge to get through this pandemic and all its after-effects, including the disruption of on-site school programmes.

It is not the time to behave, as some governments have done, in a parochial, insular, and isolationist fashion. Coordinated, united efforts will be required and no doubt launched by researchers and practitioners from schools, universities, and organizations within and outside of gifted education, and from G/T programmes all over the planet. It will take a global village to beat back a virus, give hidden talent a chance to surface, and make the world a better place.

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