

Original Paper

Enriching Gifted and Talented Minds

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Abstract

While teachers can provide gifted education and enrichment to students while they are in school, parents can also supplement, and should supplement the minds and souls of their children. This brief paper will review some realms that parents can explore either face to face, or online, or in their local neighborhood.

Introduction

While any educational system can do much to enrich and enhance the thinking skills, creativity skills and talents of students, parents must also take an active role in nurturing and enriching the minds of their children. There are certain things that parents can do that schools and teachers do not have time to do, or have time constraints. For example:

- 1) Parents can discuss current events with their children, focusing on the pros and cons of each speaker and discuss each and every current event.
- 2) Parents can encourage students to use the local library and search out for books of their interest. Parents can and should suggest some of the greatest works of literature and discuss why they chose these books and what they learned from those books. This may include American, British, French, Soviet, Spanish, and other countries. Many books have “stood the test of time” for example: Dickens- Tale of Two Cities, Dumas- The Three Musketeers, Tolstoy- War and Peace, Cervantes- Don Quixote and the list goes on and on. Some parents may remember reading the Lord of the Rings or the Hobbit and enjoying it when younger.
- 3) Parents can attempt to enhance the growth and development of their child’s thinking skills by asking students to evaluate and compare and contrast and analyze certain topics being taught in schools.
- 4) Parents can encourage their children to think critically and see all sides of any issue. There are no perfect answers and parents need to help students look at the pros and cons of decisions as well as the long term ramifications and repercussions of each decision.
- 5) The Internet should be seen as a potential for growth but parents have to guide their children as to the validity and reliability of each information site. Parents need to differentiate between the position and opinion of an author and the position of some organization with a political agenda.
- 6) Travel either via the Internet (via Google Earth) or travel in person can expose the child to a wonderful world of various cultures, languages, beliefs, attitudes, philosophies and religions. A good book in this regard- for those who are interested in this realm is by Olasky (2004).
- 7) Music Lessons- Parents can enrich their child’s future by investing in the purchase of a musical instrument and lessons.

Parents may need to first understand the mind of their child or adolescent. The child may be a book lover already, an over-thinking a procrastinator a perfectionist, an underachiever, an overly sensitive person or a “brainiac”. Prober (2019) has provided a book for parents who are attempting to understand the “rain forest” minds of their children.

Parents can enrich the minds of student by planting what Denis Waitley (1983) calls “Seeds of Greatness”.

These are:

- 1) Self-Esteem- Children need to know and feel that they are loved, valued and cherished.
- 2) Creativity and Imagination- What children “see” is important. The television and movies that they watch and the behavior of others that are near and dear to them.
- 3) Responsibility-Parents need to teach their children “as you sow so shall ye reap” The idea that the effort and energy that you put into something will pay off in the long run.
- 4) Vocabulary- Parents should invest in a good dictionary and make an effort to ameliorate the rhetoric of their child or children.
- 5) Purpose- Set goals – long and short term and stick to them!
- 6) Communication- Often people yearn to be listened to, and to be touched.
- 7) Faith- believe in oneself and believe that you matter!
- 8) Perseverance- Teach them to stick with it! Some people call this grit or determination
- 9) Adaptability---Teach kids to adjust and to be adaptable and flexible
- 10) Perspective- Winners and people who succeed and achieve are more than willing to do the things that others are not wanting to do or willing to do (Waitley, 1983).

As parents seek to get more involved in the enrichment of their talented and gifted children they need to clearly understanding the complex needs of the gifted learner. They need to do this while juxtaposing the desire for parents to understand the complexities of talented and gifted learning as well as enrichment and this is receiving international attention and perspective.

Stephen Covey (1994) the famed leadership and management icon often expressed the need to “seek to understand” - in communication and leadership. This holds true for the exceptional mind to be understood as well as addressing the unique specialized needs of every talented and gifted learner. Creativity and abstract concepts can be impacted by several factors to include intellectual capacity and critical thinking. The research expounds further that the goals and objectives of science and technology require complex thinking (Bryant, 2023).

The three most important things in regard to enrichment for the gifted child is that it is imperative as a parent to know, to understand, to encourage, and to support the child and their needs as a gifted child.

1. Above all, this means understanding the intense emotions and sensitivities, and the need for perfection which bridles the vulnerability to take risk.
2. With this understanding, it is essential that the parent advocate for their child in the school setting. The parent must partner with the teachers and open the lines of communication by sharing the challenges, sometimes socially, and how amazing the child’s strengths and abilities shine when they feel supported and understood.
3. The parent can best support their child academically by providing opportunities for growth in their areas of interest and gifted abilities through seeking academic settings that meet their needs. While this may be found in a charter school, museum, or music lesson, it is important that the parent assures their child is given time to socialize, and problem solve with gifted peers. With this joint understanding between the parent and the school-wide gifted community, any child can feel confident in who they are to become a successful and productive leader in their chosen field.

Gifted and talented students also need access to experienced mentors, counselors, and role models that could improve collaboration of parents of the gifted, the gifted educator, the gifted learner, and the overall gifted community serving high potential, and underserved children and adolescents.

Gifted children must be identified through adequate screening and identification.

The Internet can be a very valuable source of enriching gifted and talented minds. While taking a child or adolescent to a local museum can be a valuable enriching experience, gifted kids can travel the world to a museum of their choosing.

We have starred * what we consider to be the most exceptional museums.

Museum of Online Museums

<http://www.coudal.com/moom.php>

Smithsonian museums*****

<http://www.si.edu/>

Guggenheim

<http://www.guggenheim.org/>

American Association of Museums

<http://www.aam-us.org/>

Harvard Museums

http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/home_content.html

Vatican Museums*****

<http://www.christusrex.org/www1/vaticano/0-Musei.html>

Museums Online South Africa

<http://media1.mweb.co.za/mosa/>

Carnegie Museums

<http://www.carnegiemuseums.org/carnegie/index.htm>

Museum Spot

<http://www.museumspot.com/>

Natural History Museums

<http://www.lib.washington.edu/sla/natmus.html>

Association of Children's Museums*****

<http://www.childrensmuseums.org/index.htm>

Peabody Museum

<http://www.peabody.harvard.edu/>

Discovery Museums

<http://www.discoverymuseums.org/>

Unusual Museums on the Internet (scroll down past the google ads)

<http://www.ringsurf.com/netring?ring=museum;action=list>

Musee

<http://www.musee-online.org/>

Farm and Ag Museums

<http://www.alhfam.org/alhfam.links.html>

Art Source Museums

<http://www.ilpi.com/artsource/museum.html>

Sports Museums

<http://www.sportshalls.com/>

Top 100 Museums of the World

<http://www.museum.com/jb/diatop100>

Hollywood Museums

<http://www.seeing-stars.com/Museums/>

Japanese Museums

<http://www.lib.duke.edu/ias/eac/museums.htm>

Railroad Museums

<http://www.railmuseums.com/>

New Zealand Museums*****

<http://www.nzmuseums.co.nz/>

Aviation Museums

<http://www.bb62museum.org/airmus.html>

Medieval Museums

<http://www.newyorkcarver.com/museum.htm>

Museums of Greece

<http://www.greece-museums.com/>

UK Maritime Museums

<http://www.cus.cam.ac.uk/~mhe1000/marmus.htm>

Amsterdam Museums

<http://www.biddingtons.com/content/bentleyamsterdam.html>

Australian Museums*****

<http://www.austmus.gov.au/>

Masonic Museums in Europe

<http://www.ammla.org/>

Museum of Latin American Art

http://www.molaa.org/molaa_at_a_glance.html

US Museums by State

<http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/accred/list.cfm?mode=state>

Often gifted students are interested in some strange esoteric topic---such as dinosaurs. Here are some exploratory options. Parents can search the Internet for castles ghosts, oceanography, climate change or reptiles. Here are some great links:

www.usborne-quicklinks.com

ology.amnh.org/paleontology/cladogram/index.html

web.ukonline.co.uk/conker/fossils

www.discovery.conm/exp/fossilzone/bonesgame.html

www.nhm.ac.uk/education/online/dinosaur_data_files.html

www.zoomwhales.com/subjects/dinosaurs/anatomy/Size.shtml

www.enchantedlearning.comn/subjects/dinosaurs

www.vision3d.com/ehop.html
www.bbc.co.uk/dinosaurs/dino_worlds/index_week2.shtml
www.nationalgeographic.com/dinoeggs/index/html
www.bbc.co.uk/dinosaurs/dino_worlds/index_week5.shtml
www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/dinosaurs/glossary/sauropod.shtml
www.dinosauria.com/jdp/misc/parasing.html
www.fmmnh.org/sue/default.htm
www.amnh.org/exhibitions/fightingdinos
www.bbc.co.uk/dinosaurs/fact_files/tree2.shtml
www.bbc.co.uk/dinosaurs/dino_worlds/index_week4.shtml
www.ukonline.co.uk/a.buckley/dino/htm
unmuseum.mus.pa.us/dinosaf.htm
www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/dinosaurs/Dinobirds.html
www.kidrex.com
www.rainbowdolphin.com/index.htm
www.newscientist.com/nsplus/insight/reffiles/rexfiles.html
www.dinosaurs.eb.com/dinosaurs/index2.html

Parents need to heed the word of E. Paul Torrance who advised mentors as well as counselors and parents regarding gifted children. He has indicated that we should all:

“HELP THEM TO:

- 1) Be unafraid of “falling in love with something” and pursue it with intensity and in-depth. A person is motivated most to do the things they love and can do best.
 - 2) Know, understand, take pride in practice, use exploit and enjoy their greatest strengths.
 - 3) Learn to free themselves from the expectations of others and to walk away from the games that others try to impose on them
 - 4) Free themselves to play their own games in such a way as to make the best use of their strengths and follow their dreams.
 - 5) Find some great teachers and attach themselves to these teachers.
 - 6) Avoid wasting a lot of expensive unproductive energy in trying to be well rounded.
 - 7) Learn the skills of interdependence and give freely of the infinity of their greatest strengths.
- (Torrance, 1984, pp. 56-57)

In closing, we would suggest that parents “take a moment to listen”:

Take a moment to listen today
 To what your children are trying to say
 Listen today whatever you do
 Or they won't be there to listen to you
 Listen to their problems, listen for their needs
 Praise their smallest triumphs, praise their smallest deeds
 Tolerate their chatter, amplify their laughter

Find out what's the matter, find out what they're after
But tell them that you love them every single night
And though you scold them, be sure you told them
Tell them everything's all right
Tomorrows looking bright!
Take a moment to listen today
To what your children are trying to say
Listen today, whatever you do
And they will come back to listen to you
(Waitley, 1983, p. 137)

References

- Bryant, D. (2023). Experiences of addressing the specialized need of public school K-8 Gifted learners. Doctoral Dissertation Grand Canyon University Phoenix AZ.
- Olasky, M. (2004). The religions next door. Broadman and Holman Nashville TN.
- Torrance, E. P. (1984). Mentor Relationships How they aid creative achievement, Endure, change and Die Bearly Limited Buffalo NY.
- Waitley, D. (1983). Seeds of Greatness Fleming Revell Co Tappan NJ.