

Newsletter: May 2022

Welcome to the second edition of the monthly Jasneath Education newsletter. I hope you found the first issue both useful and interesting. If you missed it, back issues are available for FREE download at <https://jasneatheducation.com/newsletters>. This month's article summary examines the place of eminence within gifted education (page 2 of this newsletter). I hope you find it thought-provoking.

Now it's May, there is a focus (here in Australia) on the upcoming **Gifted Awareness Week (GAW)** (22-29 May). As I mentioned in the last newsletter, I will be launching **Jasneath Education's** second online course:

Understanding Giftedness: Social & Emotional needs, Tall Poppies & Wisdom

on the 22nd of May to coincide with GAW. Course cost is normally \$110AUD. Pre-registrations are now available and will attract a 30% discount if you use the code GAWAUS at the checkout. This code is valid until May 29th. As with all Jasneath Education courses, there are no assessments, around 10 hours of learning, and rolling enrolments with access to course materials for 165 days. There's an evolving list of Australian events being compiled on the AAEGT site. These are both face to face and virtual. Check them out at: <https://www.aaegt.net.au/gaw-events#GAWeventsbystate>

Tasmanian Association for the Gifted (TAG)

I'd like to highlight the work of TAG, a volunteer run, not-for-profit organisation in my home state of Tasmania (in Australia) (full disclosure—I'm one of their volunteers). They provide a series of excellent webinars on a wide range of topics, with a new topic addressed each month. These are free to TAG members and available at a nominal cost to non-members. Conducted via Zoom, sessions are recorded and also available for viewing after the event. If you would like more information about TAG, please see <https://www.tasgifted.com/>

Asia-Pacific Conference on Giftedness (APCG): 7-10 July 2022

A reminder about the APCG. Hosted in Taipei, with both face to face and virtual registrations—which are **FREE!** The list of keynote speakers is fabulous, being headlined by Prof. Robert Sternberg. For further information and registration, see <https://www.apcgtaipei2022.org/home.php>

Don't forget, if there are other items that you'd find useful, please let me know, as this newsletter is about providing a service and information, so it really needs to be what you're wanting/interested in. If you have any ideas or requests, please email me at jasneath.education@outlook.com



Dr Amanda J. Harper

Insights from the Literature

Worrell, F. C., Subotnik, R. F., & Olszewski-Kubilius, P. (2022). Giftedness and eminence: Clarifying the relationship. *Gifted and Talented International*, 1-12. doi.org/10.1080/15332276.2022.2049461

Worrell et al. (2022) introduce the Talent Development Mega Model (TDMM) that was developed by Subotnick et al. (2011). Worrell et al. note that the 2011 article linked school-based gifted education programs to the construct of eminence, which caused a heated debate. The authors reflect on the key principles of the TDMM. Highlights are:

Talent development in any domain begins with some sort of potential, which, with appropriate training, becomes competence, and eventually, expertise. Formal identification of potential may occur at different ages, depending on the domain and often involves increasing specialization over time. Potential “speaks to the promise of what is to come, expertise reflects the actual attainment... Moreover, a small number of experts will become so adept in their field that they will make a contribution that most individuals, including other experts in that field, will acknowledge as transforming their thinking. These latter individuals are the ones who are called eminent” (2022, p. 2).

“The transition from potential to competence to expertise requires supportive environments and effective teaching or coaching. In the absence of a competent teacher whose knowledge base scaffolds the student’s development through tasks and who can provide appropriate feedback on the developing skillset, the movement along the talent development trajectory will not occur” (p. 2-3).

In reflecting on this last point, consider the talented instrumentalist or the sports person who does not have access to an appropriately skilled and experienced tutor or coach. The same situation occurs for students in any discipline, at any age—adult learners are not excluded from this. Psycho-social skills are also identified as a necessary element “as individuals work to turn potential into competence and increase competence to expertise” (2022, p. 3). Returning to eminence, Worrell et al. state the “conclusion that we draw from the research on expertise is that all eminent individuals are experts in a domain; however, not all experts achieve eminence in the domains in which they are experts” (2022, p. 4).

The contention (documented largely throughout 2012) came when eminence was suggested as an outcome of gifted education. To clarify, Worrell et al. (2022, p. 6), state that the argument presented by Subotnik et al. (2011, p. 3) was that “eminence ought to be the chief goal of gifted education” *as a field*. Even if we accept eminence as a potential outcome of gifted education programs, it is a *long-term* outcome that is not the province of early teachers. Coaches want their highly talented middle school athletes to eventually get to the Olympics or a professional league. Faculty in doctoral programs want their students to be hired by top-ranked universities upon completion of their degree and to move up the rank to full professor. However, these are *aspirational* goals. The proximal goal of any teacher or coach from preschool to graduate school is to prepare their students to move on to and succeed at the next level of performance, whether that be Grade 1, an Advanced Placement course, or a coding team at a software company. Educators at all levels *should assume* that all of their students with high potential or competence have the possibility to become experts in their field, and they should provide the appropriate education and training that maximizes that possibility”.

The authors conclude that eminence is the label reserved for the ‘gifted among the gifted’ where talents are fully developed, both in domains that are currently highly valued and in those not yet developed or recognized as important.