

# Supporting and Developing Talents in a Complex, Changing World

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# Content of lecture

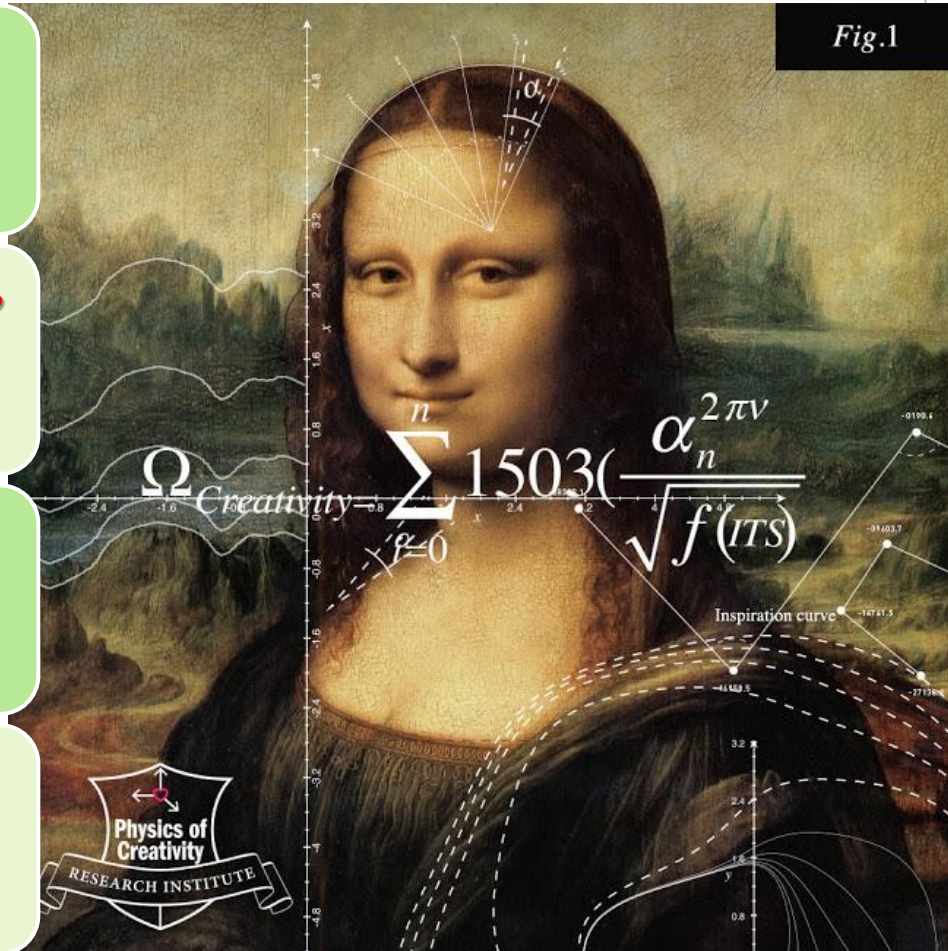
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# Introduction

- ▶ Gifted education and supporting talent has gained heightened importance in the global knowledge age and creative economy of 21st century (Dai, 2016).
- ▶ Supporting talent and giftedness - this topic needs permanent re-assessment because of the progress of society and changes in many areas of human life.
- ▶ Gifted people create new ideas and products that can be used for the benefit of all society.

# Developing a talent and potential as a human right

- ▶ Every person has a right to develop his/her potential to the fulfilment of the personal capabilities and well-being.
- ▶ **Article 29 (1), Convention on the Rights of the child**

. ...the education of the child shall be directed to:

*The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;*

- ▶ [https://www.unicef-irc.org/portfolios/general\\_comments/GC1\\_en.doc.html](https://www.unicef-irc.org/portfolios/general_comments/GC1_en.doc.html)

# Talent personality image in the complex, changing world

D. Ambrose (2016) - a list of knowledge, skills and dispositions useful for gifted and talented in 21<sup>st</sup> century to overcome the problems connected with the globalization:

- ▶ *Broad and deep proficiency in the subject areas* - a deep-level cognitive and affective immersion in a variety of subject areas instead just learning superficial facts.
- ▶ *Creative thinking skills and inquiry-based dispositions* - to generate insightful ideas, adapt, innovate, and problem solve, a keen interest in digging into the problem situations.
- ▶ *Critical thinking skills and dispositions* - the ability to critically think about complex problem, to select and refine the most promising creative ideas, and recognize and deal with macro-problems, ethical dilemmas, and dogmatism.

# *Talent personality image in the complex, changing world*

- ▶ *Interdisciplinary thinking* -thinking and cooperating with other specialists to solve large and pressing macro-problems.
- ▶ *Visual-spatial literacy* - to create and interpret models representing complex systems and issues; generate and understand graphic models incorporating large amount of data from multiple sources.
- ▶ *Information-technology skills* - to function as highly innovative technologists or knowledgeable consumers of information technology.
- ▶ *Financial business, economic, and entrepreneurial acumen.*

# *Talent personality image in the complex, changing world*

- ▶ *Intrapersonal self-discovery and a sense of purpose* - a wisdom to improve one's intrapersonal insight and a sense of direction; the ability to recognize and assess strengths, weaknesses, talents, and interests, and use these discoveries to develop adaptive, purposive self-direction.
- ▶ *Cognitive diversity* - represents a dimension of creative intelligence to give better chance to solve complex problems.
- ▶ *Interpersonal ability, collaborative skills, and leadership* - today's complex problems and opportunities demand the efficient intertwining of diverse minds, as well as the ability to cooperate in this process.
- ▶ Ethical insight, global and multicultural awareness, and personal and social responsibility -

# Discussion about the reason, time, methods, and contextual factors of nurturing talent

- ▶ *What* is to be identified?
- ▶ *Indicators*: Cognitive aptitudes (intellectual precocity), quick comprehension, high speed learning, premature understanding of concepts, large vocabulary, curiosity, creative abilities.
- ▶ *Moderators* such as intrinsic achievement motivation, persistence, willingness to take risk, preference for independent learning style, and coping with stress and anxiety.
- ▶ *Criteria* - performance, achievement variables in specific areas.



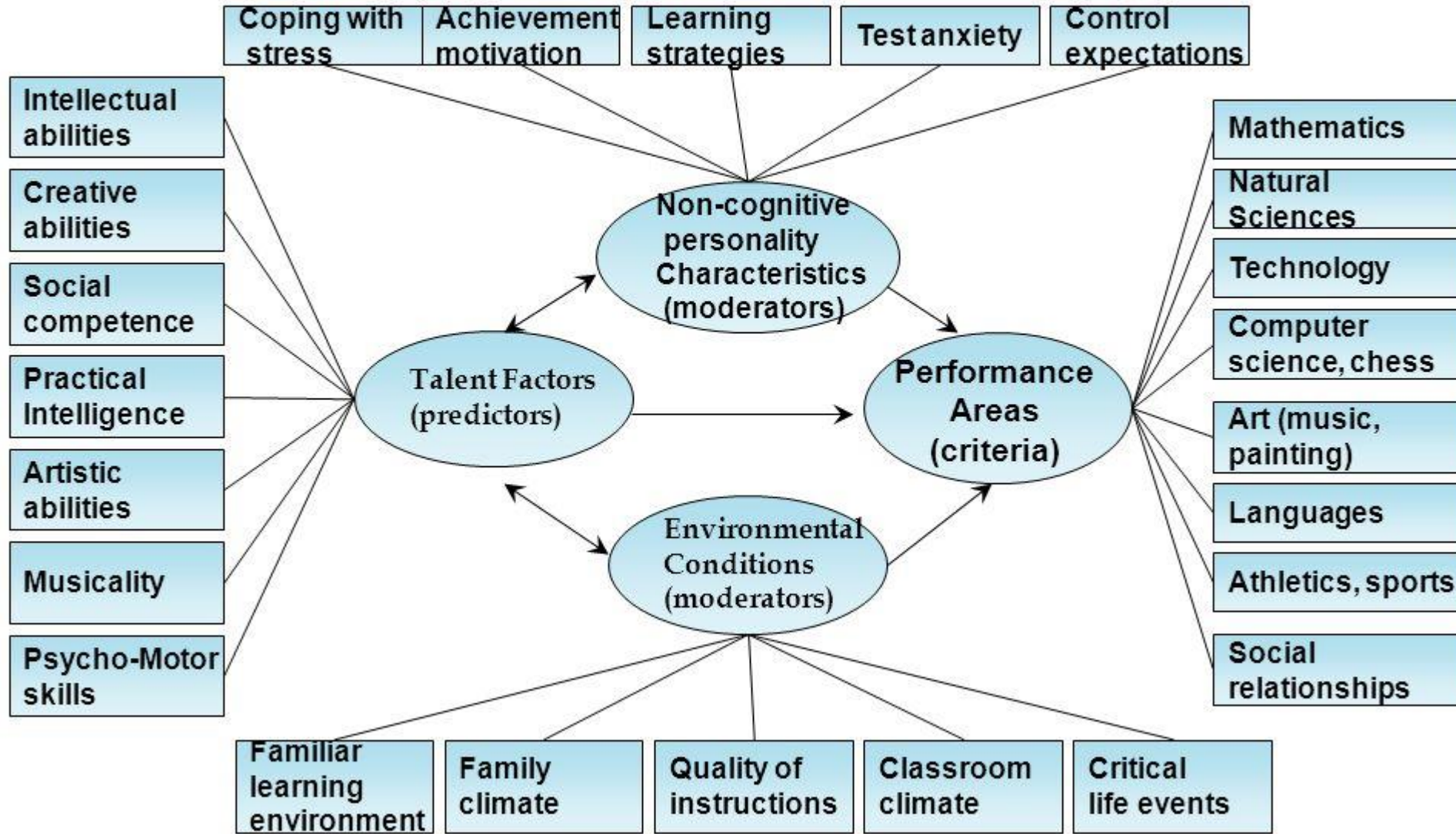
# How can be giftedness assessed?

- ▶ **Giftedness** can be assessed using psychometric models, dynamic-oriented models, or expert-novice paradigm.
- ▶ **Psychometric models** - status-diagnostic versus dynamic or process-oriented models focus on *individual potential*.
- ▶ **Expert-novice paradigm** focuses on personality (motivation and learning) and social-cultural condition.
- ▶ There are also attempts to combine these approaches - **synthetic approach**.

## *Psychometric multidimensional giftedness models*

- ▶ Instead of critique - they are indispensable,
- ▶ e.g., **Munich Model of Giftedness** (Heller, 2001, 2007) refers to **giftedness as a multifactorized ability** construct, within a network of *noncognitive and social moderators*, which are related to giftedness factors and performance areas.
- ▶ This model works with three kinds of variables: **predictors (abilities), moderators, and criteria (performances)**.

# Munich Model of Giftedness



## Discussion about the reason, time, methods, and contextual factors of nurturing talent (2)

- ▶ *Why - functions and benefits of identification*
- ▶ Two main functions of the identification - talent search and single case analysis (Heller and Schofield, 2007).
- ▶ **The talent search** is legitimized by
- ▶ 1.the right of every person to receive optimal nurturance of potential, talent,
- ▶ 2.the social demand on individual to make an appropriate contribution to the society.

## Discussion about the reason, time, methods, and contextual factors of nurturing talent (3)

- ▶ **Single case analysis** - for the purpose of educational treatment, counselling, and the intervention.

# Problem concerning identification

- ▶ Several problems concerning identification:
- ▶ Lack of knowledge, prejudices.
- ▶ Recognition of high-risk groups of gifted students, such as handicapped, with behavioral problems, girls, socially disadvantaged students, underachievers, etc.
- ▶ Unfavourable family and school settings.

# Methodological problems of identification

- ▶ Questions about the ***definition of giftedness and talent indicators***, sources of diagnostic information, and measurement problems.
- ▶ Diagnostic decisions strategies, the effectiveness and economy of the selection of talented students for appropriate gifted programs.
- ▶ The decision to use static diagnostic approaches or dynamic or process oriented approaches, etc.

# *When to identificate?*

- ▶ As soon as possible (in a preschool or elementary school age).
- ▶ How could be identification organised - as sporadic or continuous?
- ▶ As a voluntary or on the obligatory basis?
- ▶ Early identification and prognosis is indispensable for educators and counsellors.
- ▶ Critics argue that an optimal nurturance of all groups of population is necessary.



## Discussion about the reason, time, methods, and contextual factors of nurturing talent (4)

- ▶ *Contextual factors of nurturing talent*
- ▶ The development of talent - depending on environmental factors, contextual factors, such as **the influence of families, schools, and communities**.
- ▶ Sociocultural forces include both micro- and macro-social influences on personal development.
- ▶ *Micro-social factors* - family, school, “significant others” (e.g., professors or mentors, peers, friends, and other people nearest the gifted at the beginning of their careers).
- ▶ *Macro-social forces* - cultural, political, and historical conditions that affect exceptional achievements (e.g., society as a whole, culture, and the particular historical period).

# Family Environment

- ▶ Giftedness development strongly depends on the good interaction of individual characteristics and environmental factors.
- ▶ *Talent Development - for the child is very important what can family do for the development child ability*
- ▶ Paula Olszewski-Kubilius - two important influences of family in the development of the talents of children, namely the generational history and marginality of family.
- ▶ **Generational history** refers to the role of past generations in talent development by an involvement in some domain (for example musicians), through the stability of generations and accumulation of the resources. Family has a sufficient amount of knowledge, skills, abilities, and financial assets.
- ▶ **Marginality of families** can lead to the development of early talent through unusual paths. The experience of being an outsider - common to many extraordinary achievers.
- ▶ This marginalisation - many forms, including ethnic, economic, religious, gender, sexual orientation, and professional.

# Family Environment

- ▶ Families provide learning experiences and opportunities that are crucial in order to transform gifts and talents into achievement.
- ▶ Typical for families with gifted children:
- ▶ - **Socio-economic background**: wealthy and intellectual middle and upper class families (Birx, 1988; Howe, 1990) providing the children with the monetary and intellectual resources for giftedness development.
- ▶ - **Social family variables**: Howe (1990) - successful scientists (e.g., Nobel Prize winners) came from intact families and reported a happy childhood.
- ▶ gifted children were planned children and pregnancy and birth went without difficulties (Berger, 1984).
- ▶ -

# Family Environment

- ▶ *Educational style and family climate*: An educational style that favours motivation development has to balance freedom and pressure.
- ▶ A medium level of control and discipline has to be compared with high positive emotional regard (Perleth et al., 2000).
- ▶ Dwairy (2004) - parents of gifted adolescents were more authoritative and less authoritarian.
- ▶ An authoritative parental style - positively correlated with the mental health of the gifted and the students of the control group.
- ▶ An authoritarian style on the contrary was only for gifted students negatively correlated with mental health.

# *Schools in the process of talent development*

- ▶ Kindergarten and schools usually identify talents:
- ▶ By reactive interaction between dispositions and environment, which means the environment (in this case the teachers) reacts on the talents of the child.
- ▶ Teachers and educators can contribute to the promotion and development of giftedness *by mentoring gifted children, helping them to find new fields of interest, or enabling them to perform activities in their favourite domain or field of interest.*
- ▶ Educational institutions, especially such with special gifted programs, provide *opportunities to meet likeminded people* and to grow into a community of excellence.
- ▶ However, *a barrier* with regard to an adequate promotion of giftedness at school is **the lack of individualization.**

# Gifted education and counselling

- ▶ The right of every child - including the gifted - to **the very best education** that can society provide.
- ▶ Joyce VanTassel-Baska (1989) -*five elements* essential to the success of a program for gifted students:
  - ▶ Content acceleration to the level of the child abilities.
  - ▶ Thoughtfully planned, relevant enrichment.
  - ▶ Guidance in selecting courses and directions.
  - ▶ Instruction with the opportunity to work closely with other gifted youth.
  - ▶ The opportunity to work with mentors who have high level of expertise in area.

# Gifted Child Paradigm

- ▶ **Gifted Child Paradigm** has been a dominant approach to gifted education in past century.
- ▶ It is characterised by the essentialist conception of what constitutes giftedness, the status definition of giftedness, the categorical approach, and.
- ▶ Critics consider gifted child paradigm as unsuccessful and antithetical to progress.

# Gifted Child Paradigm

## *The essentialist conception of giftedness*

- ▶ is based on general intelligence (Spearman's g factor) and the psychometric measurement (IQ testing).
  - ▶ But it is controversial to measure such complex construct as the intelligence is (the set of cognitive abilities for learning and problem solving) *by means of a test of special dispositions* (e.g. working memory capacity).
  - ▶ *So, the assumption of the qualitative difference of giftedness does not hold.*
- ▶ Intelligence is too broad, abstract concept to be amenable to psychometric measurement as one dimension.
  - ▶ Standard intelligence tests provide a composite score by combining a set of task performances.
  - ▶ This is an empirical approach to the test construction and it is based on including some different tasks.
  - ▶ The same IQ score could be attained by differing cognitive performances in particular subtests.
  - ▶ Therefore, *it does mean that homogeneity assumption is not valid.*
  - ▶ *The changing conception of intelligence is based on the shift from the essentialist approach toward a more functional approach.*



# Gifted Child Paradigm

## *The categorical approach to giftedness*

- ▶ Exclusive and socially inequitable (Dai, 2016).
  - ▶ Built on *the status definition of giftedness*, that is, person is either gifted or not gifted.
  - ▶ Giftedness - a “mental quality“ in contradiction to the other paradigms, which stress the “competence” view of giftedness.
  - ▶ Mental qualities are seen as *highly stable or fixed*.
  - ▶ Those with high mental qualities have a right to be educated in the gifted programs or not?
  - ▶ Those who lack “mental qualities” are less worthy for the educational enrichment programs?
- ▶ *The cut-off* used for gifted-nongifted identification is also problematic matter because of its arbitrary nature.
  - ▶ In conclusion, the categorical approach to gifted education and supporting talent is leading to exclusive education for a very small of a percentage of students.

## *Identification based on “general aptitude”*

- ▶ *Identification based on “general aptitude”, which is characteristic property of the Gifted Child Paradigm, is not effective for educational purposes.*
- ▶ *The question is what piece of information is more informative for educational placement, an IQ score or demonstrated strengths and interests in the educational settings?*
- ▶ *The answer is that the latter.*

- ▶ Gifted education is insulated from a broad educational setting.
- ▶ It does not incorporate into its curriculum the new topics such as development of creative and critical thinking.
- ▶ Also the gifted education is slow in response to the changing world

# Talent development paradigm

- ▶ Talent Development Paradigm - represents a pluralist and developmental view of talent.
- ▶ It goes beyond the IQ doctrine.
- ▶ Based on the child's demonstrated potential or aptitude of for a particular field of talent development.
- ▶ Talent in this conception is seen as contextually and dynamically shaped by interactions with the environment.

# Holistic perspective on gifted education

- ▶ Education aims to support the whole person development rather than merely the cognitive domain.
- ▶ A growth mind-set as a key to lifelong learning and creative thinking.
- ▶ The 21st-century skills include an open-minded attitude and a growth mind-set to learning.
- ▶ Mind-set are beliefs that hold individuals about their basic qualities and abilities
- ▶ Three essential perspectives for the education of the gifted in 21st.:
  1. *Values and worldviews.*
  2. *Growth mind-set for learning that promotes creative thinking.*
  3. *Ethical skills*

# Problems in counselling gifted

- ▶ The asynchrony between acceleration of the intelligence development and „immature“ affectivity.
- ▶ Behavioural problems due to lack of challenge, social isolation due to lack of contacts with gifted peers, and problem specific to gifted girls.
- ▶ A directed talent nurturance is hardly possible without identification.
- ▶ Problems of labelling - the being gifted is perceived mostly positively by gifted and their environment.
- ▶ Career counselling - issue of multi-potentiality of gifted young person.

# Conclusion

- ▶ Supporting talent is critical condition for the development of one's human potential and the mankind in the today's global knowledge economy.
- ▶ There is no general optimal model for developing and supporting talent.
- ▶ The effectiveness of talent development programs - necessary to evaluate.
- ▶ The investment to the supporting talented and gifted are investments to the whole society progress.