

Gifted Children

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World Council for Gifted and Talented Children's 17th Biennial World Conference

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In August 2007, England will play host to the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children's 17th Biennial World Conference at the University of Warwick, Coventry.

This conference marks over 30 years of international collaboration on gifted and talented education.

Whilst preparations are well underway for the 2007 conference it is useful to reflect on the homecoming of this international event which was the brainchild of Englishman Henry Collis. Collis, with a keen interest in gifted education, was aware that nationally educators and researchers were pooling their ideas on gifted education and realised the need to look beyond what we are doing in our own country and share policies and best practice from across the globe. It was due to Collis' vision of an international community of educators interested in gifted and talented students that the first World Conference on Gifted Children was held in London in 1975.

Over 500 people attended the first conference, representing 53 nations with keynote papers from 24 countries. It was at this conference that the notion of a permanent international collaboration was proposed. At the second World Conference in 1977 in San Francisco, the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children was established as an association, its mission to focus attention on gifted and talented children and ensure the realisation of their valuable potential benefit to humankind.

Today, the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children is a diverse organization networking the globe with an active membership of educators, scholars, researchers, parents, educational institutions, and others interested in giftedness from over 46 countries. Conferences have been held every two years since 1975 at locations spanning the globe including: Turkey, Spain, Australia, Hong Kong, and in 2005 in New Orleans, USA.

The 17th Biennial Conference, 'Worlds of Giftedness: From Local to Global', echoes the ethos behind Henry Collis' initial ideas on international collaboration. The overarching theme for this conference is the way different cultures create different conceptions of giftedness and talent, which in turn

feed into differing policies and practices. In addition to celebrating the homecoming of the conference and over 30 years of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, the conference also marks 10 years of government policy on gifted and talented education in England, an important milestone.

In keeping with the global theme of the conference, lead speakers have been invited from Africa, Canada, China, Finland, The United Kingdom, and the United States of America. One of the lead speakers will be Professor Loyiso Nongxa, Vice Chancellor of Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg. Professor Nongxa was South Africa's first black Rhodes scholar and first black Vice Chancellor and has developed an important programme to improve access to university for children in the South African townships.

Also speaking will be Nancy Green, Executive Director of The National Association for Gifted Children, America; Dr Chris Yapp, Head of Public Sector Innovation at Microsoft UK - well known for his thinking about learning in the future, and Dr Elena Grigorenko, Associate Professor of Child Studies and Psychology at Yale University and Associate Professor of Psychology at Moscow State University.

Hosted by the University of Warwick and generously supported by the DfES, the 17th Biennial Conference promises to be an exciting event and a wonderful opportunity for colleagues from around the globe to meet and share ideas and policies. With a full social programme already well into its final planning stages and the possibility of a student event running concurrently, this is an event not to be missed by anyone with an interest in gifted and talented education. We look forward to meeting you there!

Full details on the conference programme and speakers is now available on the website at www.worldgifted2007.com. Registration and booking can be completed online and any queries should be directed to the Conference Secretariat at: worldgifted2007@warwick.ac.uk, Tel: +44 (0) 24 7657 4620

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