

***DIVERSITY IN GIFTED  
EDUCATION: INTERNATIONAL  
PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBAL  
ISSUES***

Author: Belle Wallace and Gillian Eriksson  
(Eds.)

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Once every generation, a work emerges that has the potential to change the face of gifted education. Recently, Belle Wallace and Gillian Eriksson have produced such a work with their book, *Diversity in Gifted Education: International Perspectives on Global Education*. Utilizing the insights of

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international scholars and practitioners, *Diversity in Gifted Education* explores many issues facing teachers, parents, and schools. Eschewing traditional gifted education categories, such as identification, creativity, social & emotional needs and the like, Wallace and Eriksson have crafted new groupings that accommodate and adapt to demographic and philosophical changes that have rocked education.

*Diversity in Gifted Education* groups its chapters around eleven issues facing the field. These issues include: cognition and underachievement; bilingually enriched students; culturally diverse students; socio-economic class; ethnic promise and prejudice; ethical perspectives; gender; exceptionality; development and age; global education; and international profiles. A chapter is devoted to each issue, with many chapters ending with a brief conflict resolution scenario. Each chapter also contains a case study or a personal perspective that describes individual experiences with the issue at hand. Questions are provided that would be helpful to those leading discussions related to the issues contained in each chapter, whether the conversation be part of a class or a professional development session. With over 50 separate contributions, most of the subchapters are quite short, making them readily accessible to those looking for information quickly. Contributors range from those with international reputations, such as Barbara Clark, June Maker, Sally Reis, Joseph Renzulli, Sylvia Rimm, and Robert Sternberg, to those who add new voices to the conversation.

This approach has several advantages to those using the work, whether those individuals be public school personnel, researchers, or college faculty. First, the categories recognize the wealth of diverse experiences and backgrounds students bring

with them to the classroom. Diversity is impacted by language, culture, social class, ethnicity, race, and assorted other factors—this book allows readers to either focus on specific issues or deal with general demographic changes. Second, case studies from a variety of international settings are provided. These vignettes allow discussion to focus on real situations and problems and may prove helpful for groups looking for solutions to specific problems. Finally, the work offers powerful synopses of the most popular, and best documented, approaches prevalent in gifted education. Too many attempts to criticize the field of gifted education for a lack of responsiveness to diverse learners have demonstrated weak understanding of what gifted education attempts to do (see, e.g., Oakes, 2005; Sapon-Shevin, 1994). The focus on international practices is refreshing, useful, and powerful—far too often our practices are limited by those methods with which we are most familiar. Exposure to other nations' practices assists us to broaden our perspectives and to consider alternative ways of dealing with common situations. *Diversity in Gifted Education* provides a compelling, comprehensive, and cogent overview of gifted education, which in turn makes its insights into ways of accommodating and serving diverse learners all the more insightful and useful.

*Diversity in Gifted Education* is a work that all interested in gifted education, diverse student populations, and international and comparative education must possess. As do most classic works, it seamlessly combines the best of prior work with innovative ways of looking at old predicaments. *Diversity in Gifted Education* is of value to the scholar, the practitioner, and the advocate of gifted education. It should be read with care by all examining new paradigms for gifted education.



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**References**

Oakes, J. (2005). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality* (2nd ed.). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sapon-Shevin, M. (1994). *Playing favorites: Gifted education and the disruption of community*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

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CAROL VAN DER WESTHUIZEN

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*NICOLA HEWSON, age 17*

