



## 2022 MCGT Conference Adult Session Descriptions

### **Understanding Intensities in Gifted Children**

**Teresa Boatman, Ph.D**

We will discuss together the five intensities which may be found in gifted and talented children and responses for each intensity that parents and others can use to support GT learners.

*Teresa Boatman is the past president of MCGT and a psychologist who works with gifted children and their families. She specializes in educational interventions and supporting the mental health needs of individuals.*

### **Curating your child's education through homeschooling and more**

**MCGT's CHOICES Chapter panel**

Many gifted kids have a great educational experience where they learn at their local district schools during the day, then their parents facilitate lifelong learning across nights, weekends, and summer. Other families replace that familiar traditional public school module with other ways of learning: parent-led homeschooling, co-ops and learning pods, part-time schools, virtual programs, and more. Join a panel of MCGT homeschooling parents for a conversation about curating your gifted child's education in today's world; we welcome curious onlookers as well as veterans seeking connections and ideas for fine-tuning.

### **Teaching Research Skills: Benefits to Teens, their Families, and Gifted Education**

**Terry Friedrichs, Ph. D., Ed. D.**

In this three-part session: 1) the lead presenter describes the steps that he and other educators have used to effectively educate gifted teens on college-level research skills, 2) one student tells how she learned research skills on twice-exceptional (2e) students to put together an educational checklist for local physicians that would educate them on the often misunderstood needs of these youth, and 3) the audience dialogues about how they might implement the teaching of research with their own children as well as the school-based encouragement of such research teaching.

*Terry Friedrichs holds two doctorates, in gifted education and in educational empowerment, the latter of which deals partly with instruction of students in advocacy and research skills. For 45 years, has been teaching research skills to K-12 gifted and 2e students, guiding their research projects, and co-presenting with them at the state, national, and international levels.*

### **Bright & Quirky: Identifying 2e Autistic Children**

**Megan Helmen, Psy.D., LP**

Traits of giftedness and autism overlap. Autism is a complex diagnosis that can present differently among the exceptionally intelligent. This talk reviews the constellation of autism traits and how they can present in gifted individuals. Relevant research is included along with clinical examples.

*Dr. Helmen became specialized in autism and pediatric neuropsychology during her clinical internship and postdoctoral fellowship. For the past 9 years, Dr. Helmen has had the privilege of providing neuropsychological evaluations for children with a variety of developmental concerns in an outpatient*

*clinical setting. Now in private practice at Developmental Discoveries, she has developed a niche in evaluating twice exceptional children.*

### **Engaging Students and Building Relationships that Facilitate Achievement**

#### **Melissa Malen, Ph.D**

Transitioning to learning environments since the pandemic began is challenging for students and parents. Research shows that students have stalled or lost learning gains and that high levels of student disengagement is occurring. This presentation takes a look at these challenges and provides examples and feedback from students that have experienced these strategies in a learning environment.

*Melissa Peterson Malen, PhD, is the owner of AxyLu Academic Coaching, LLC, Co-Founder of the nonprofit Focus and Learning Center, and International Talent Education Institute, Slovenia--American Partner. She specializes in coaching students and adults who experience performance challenges in the areas of executive function and self-regulation. Dr. Malen coaches clients that have ADHD, dyslexia, nonverbal learning disability, or are twice exceptional. Melissa presents at conferences in the United States and internationally, both in-person and virtually, and also provides professional development for teachers and counselors. Melissa earned an MA in Counseling Psychology from the University of St. Thomas and a PhD in Education from the University of Minnesota. Dr. Malen has researched the experience of parents of students with ADHD and is developing programs targeted at improving student underachievement.*

### **Supporting gifted-LGBTQ youth**

#### **Teresa Manzella, M.A.**

This session will address some of the challenges that gifted LGBTQ+ students and their families may encounter over the course of their educational and developmental journeys. Following an overview of some of the current legislative and curricular issues pertaining to LGBTQ+ youth, as well as extended family issues that may arise as youth explore their identities, Teresa will offer strategies that parents may use to achieve positive outcomes for their kids. We'll also have time to discuss how school and family environments may be affecting student outcomes and how parents can effectively advocate for their kids' needs across multiple settings.

*Teresa Ryan Manzella, M.A., is a founding member of the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) GLBTQ Network. She has authored numerous articles, book chapters, and online resources on gifted-LGBTQ topics, published by NAGC, Prufrock Press, and other gifted organizations. Her most recent work is as lead author of the "Transgender and Nonbinary Youth" chapter in Culturally Responsive Teaching in Gifted Education, released in June 2021 by Prufrock. She serves on the MN Department of Education Committee on Gifted and Talented Education, the MCGT Connections Committee, and the American Mensa Ltd. National Gifted Youth Committee. She has been invited, by organizations across the U.S., to present on strategies to address the complex challenges facing gifted-LGBTQ youth.*

### **Gifted 101**

#### **Pam McDonald, M.A.**

You think you may have a gifted child; You know you have a gifted child; Your child was just identified as gifted by a school, doctor, or psychologist. YIKES!! What now?? This presentation will provide a beginning road map for you that includes basic information on giftedness, parenting tips, and how to advocate for your child and out of school. A must presentation for those of you new to the world of giftedness.

*Pam McDonald is the former GT lead teacher for District 196 where she spent twenty-seven years supporting gifted learners, classroom teachers, and administrators in all areas of gifted education. Her passion became working with underserved gifted learners. Pam was instrumental in supporting the Young Scholars Program which sought to identify, and support underserved gifted learners, throughout the state of Minnesota. Pam was awarded MEGT's Friend of the Gifted Award in 2016. She has a master's degree from the University of St. Thomas with areas of concentration in gifted education and early childhood gifted education. She has been an adjunct professor in Gifted Education at Hamline University.*

*Pam has a children's book coming out through Fox Pointe Publications in 2023. She continues to support gifted families and teachers through Pam McDonald Consulting...Access, Advocacy, and Assessment for Gifted Families*

### **This Shouldn't Be So Hard: Sensory Accommodations and Modifications in Schools**

#### **Max Melby**

The first goal of this session is to validate and hopefully expand on many of the things that you already know about your child's sensory needs with a mix of peer-reviewed evidence and professional input. The second goal of this session is to demonstrate how a handful of neurodiverse-friendly schools build exceptional sensory needs into their programming. The third goal of this session is to share some pointers around advocating for sensory accommodations or modifications at school without putting school staff on the defense.

*Max Melby is the Head of School at Arete Academy- a school serving bright students who learn differently (2e) since 2014. Max's teaching foundation is in experiential, environmental, and science education and his approach to education has been permanently impacted by working with 2e students for the last eight years.*

### **Be the Boss of Your Brain, Visual Spatial Style**

#### **Martha Palm, BA, MaED, Gifted, Twice Exceptional Certification**

Top 10 things to know about the talents and struggles of visual spatial thinkers:

1. Pay attention and value your brain
2. Big picture thinker
3. Procrastination thoughts
4. Organization strategies
5. Academic connecting
6. See things all at once
7. The world in patterns
8. Photographic Memory
9. Multiplication table
10. Non-Linear thinking in math using intuition

*Martha Palm has a masters degree in education, along with a certificate in both gifted and twice exceptional. She has over 30 years in the elementary classroom in a variety of settings one of which was the Dimensions Academy program grades 4 and 5. Martha is now an educational therapist and tutor helping kids manage their minds to harness their fantastic potential. Working with kids always brings me joy!*

### **The Alchemy of Perfectionism**

#### **Tina Van Erp, M.Ed**

Join this long term gifted educator to discover the multiple dimensions of perfectionism. Perfectionism is often commented on as a conclusion rather than a solution. There are many ingredients to the experience of perfectionism. Beyond "There is no such thing as perfect" we seek to understand the differences between healthy and unhealthy perfectionism and the complexity when mixed with asynchronous development, intensities, giftedness and neurodiversity. This session will provide an expanded definition and language to better equip your child to decrease perfectionism as a barrier and burden.

*Tina Van Erp, M.Ed is a Gifted Learner Coach, Learning Specialist and Teacher Trainer with 20 years of experience working with gifted learners and their families. As The River® Coach, she empowers gifted learners through knowledge of themselves as a learner, a positive relationship with learning and developing a personal style of self-advocacy.*

## **Parenting Like Newt Scamander**

**Mary L. Wandrei, Ph.D**

Parenting gifted kids can feel like tending to fantastic beasts: exhilarating and rewarding, yet weird and exhausting. Here we'll talk about the model that movie character Newt Scamander offers for understanding, communicating with, and guiding gifted children and teens in an assortment of situations, even when we feel less than fantastic ourselves.

*Mary L. Wandrei, PhD, specializes in psychotherapy for gifted and talented and twice-exceptional children and adults; autism screening/consultation; school adjustment and educational planning; and consultation around executive functioning, anxiety, depression, sensory processing, and temperament issues. She also supervises therapists in training, who often have openings when therapy is hard to find, and offers office space for multidisciplinary providers (therapists, nutritionists, coaches) who work with intense and gifted individuals.*