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**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR  
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# THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD

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## EDITORIAL

More than ever, the *Exceptional Child – The Journal of the National Council for Exceptional Children (NCEC)* remains the singular instrument that sustains the corporate existence of the Association. This is as the Article 2 of the objectives of the Constitution clearly indicates and points to the direction – to encourage publication and dissemination of appropriate information on issues involving special education development, implementation, evaluation and research at all levels of education.

The Volume 15, Number 1 is published on the mandate of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Conference held at Uyo, Akwa Ibom State in August 2013 with the Theme: ROAD MAP FOR SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION AND NIGERIA'S VISION 20-20-20. This particular issue is a “dish” of research reports and significant theoreticals which focus on the conference theme and sub-themes that marked the professional and academic business of the Association at that period.

This particular Edition could be termed *Journal of Consolation*. It takes a large heart to run one big family whose members possess pragmatic but emotional interests and ideologies. Again within a space of three months (April – June, 2014), the mortals' chiefest enemy – Death, snatched two prominent pioneer members of the Association: Professors Emmanuel Ojile and Charity Andzayi, all of the Special Education and Rehabilitation Sciences Department, University of Jos.

A high profile learned journal, the publication of which has been sustained for the past 25 years, would have in no small way, precipitated some challenges on its way to enhanced growth and development. Addressing the challenges will surely rest on the shoulders of the stakeholders: the Board of Editors, all the excellent members of the Association, the researchers and article contributors including the readers and “consumers” in general. Our profound gratitude and sincere appreciation are expressed for your persistent efforts and contribution toward sustaining the excellence of this journal.

**Onyenwe P. I. Osuorji**  
Editor-in-Chief



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**MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN IN NIGERIA**

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**G.A. Adelodun***University of Ibadan**Faculty of Education, Department of Special Education,  
Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria***Abstract**

*In this paper, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been conceived as the eight international goals that were officially established by the entire 193 United Nations member states together with at least 23 international organizations which they jointly agreed to achieve by the year 2015. Similarly in this paper, coping with challenges involved in inclusive education for gifted and talented children in Nigeria was extensively discussed. This becomes necessary because the curriculum of teacher education in inclusive setting in Nigeria is geared towards meeting the needs of average students who do not require special education intervention. Ironically however, the regular classroom in inclusive education is not made up of average students alone. Both the rapid learners as well as gifted/talented students and the slow learners form part of the class. It is therefore the concern of this paper to discuss nurturant and coping skills that could be used by the teacher to meet the challenges posed by the presence of gifted students in inclusive education settings. Furthermore, in this paper, the relationship between Millennium Development Goals and Gifted and Talented children in Nigeria has been linked to the fact that the two aim at developing every nation both economically and technologically. In conclusion, the relationship between the two could further be traced to the recommendations made by United Nations Enable (2013) on disability and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).*

**Keywords:** Millennium Development Goals, Inclusive Education, Gifted and Talented

**Introduction**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) can be described as the eight international goals that were officially established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in the year 2000, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The entire 193 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve these goals by the year 2015. The goals are as follows:



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- Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger,
- Achieving universal primary education,
- Promoting gender equality and empowering women,
- Reducing child mortality rates,
- Improving maternal health,
- Combating HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases,
- Ensuring environmental sustainability, and
- Developing a global partnership for development.

However, it must be pointed out that each of the aforementioned goals has specific stated targets and dates for achieving those targets. In order to accelerate progress, the goal eight Finance Ministers agreed in June 2005 to provide enough funds to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the African Development Bank (AFDB) to cancel an additional \$40 to \$55 billion in debt owed by members of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) to allow impoverished countries to re-channel the resources saved from the forgiven debt to social programmes for improving health and education and for alleviating poverty.

Debate has surrounded adoption of the MDGs, focusing on lack of analysis and justification behind the chosen objectives, the difficulty of lack of measurements for some of the goals, and uneven progress towards reaching the goals, among other criticisms. Although developed countries aid for achieving the MDGs has been rising over recent years, more than half the aid is towards debt relief owed by poor countries, with much of the remaining aid money going towards natural disaster relief and military aid which do not further development.

Information has it that progress towards reaching the goals has been uneven. Some countries have achieved many of the goals, while others are not on tract to realize any (Noeleen, 2005). A United Nation's Conference in September 2010 reviewed progress to date and concluded with the adoption of a global action plan to achieve the eight anti-poverty goals by their 2015 target date. According to Singer (2008), there were also new commitments on women's and children's health, and new initiatives in the worldwide battle against poverty, hunger, and disease.

Government organizations assist in achieving those goals, among them are the United Nations Millennium Campaign, the Millennium Promise Alliance, International, the Global Poverty Project, the Micah Challenge, The Youth in Action EU programme, "Cartoons in Action" video project, and the eight (8) visions of hope global art project.

The aim of the Millennium Development Goals is to encourage development by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries (Carrasco, 2007). They derive from earlier international development targets and were officially established following the millennium summit in the year 2000, where all world leaders in attendance adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Millennium Summit was with the report of eradication, environmental protection, human rights and protection



of the vulnerable. The approval of the MDGs was possibly the main outcome of the Millennium Summit. In the area of peace and security, the adoption of the Brahimi Report was seen as properly equipping the organization to carry out the mandates given by the security council.

The MDGs originated from the Millennium Declaration produced by the United Nations. The Declaration asserts that every individual has the right to dignity, freedom, equality, a basic standard of living that includes freedom from hunger and violence, and encourages tolerance and solidarity. The MDGs were made to operationalize these ideas by setting targets and indicators for poverty reduction in order to achieve the rights set forth in the Declaration on a set fifteen-year time line. An introduction to the Human Development and Capability Approach: Freedom and Agency. The Millennium Summit Declaration was, however, only part of the origins of the MDGs. It came about from not just the United Nations but also the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

The MDG focus on three major areas: of valorising human capital, improving infrastructure, and increasing social, economic and political rights, with the majority of the focus going towards increasing basic standards of living. The Millennium Development Goals Report: The objective chosen within the human capital focus include improving nutrition, healthcare (including reducing levels of child mortality, HIV/AIDs, tuberculosis and malaria and increasing productive health), and education for the infrastructure focus, the objectives include improving infrastructure through increasing access to safe drinking water, energy and modern information/communication technology; amplifying farm outputs through sustainable practices; improving transportation infrastructure; and preserving the environment. Lastly, for the social, economic and political rights focus, the objectives include empowering women, reducing violence, increasing political voice, ensuring equal access to public services, and increasing security of property rights. The goals chosen were intended to increase an individual's human capabilities and "advance the means to a productive life". The MDGs emphasize that individual policies needed to achieve these goals should be tailored to individual country's needs; therefore most policy suggestions are general.

The MDGs also emphasize the role of developed countries in aiding developing countries, as outlined in goal eight. Goal eight sets objectives and targets for developed countries to achieve a "global partnership for development" by supporting fair trade, debt relief for developing nations, increasing aid and access to affordable essential medicines, and encouraging technology transfer. Thus developing nations are not seen as left to achieve the MDGs on their own, but as a partner in the developing-developed compact to reduce world poverty.

Having highlighted and discussed much about the eight (8) International Development goals which all the 193 United Nations member states and minimum of 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015 and which is an integral part of this paper, effort will now be made to concentrate on how to cope with



challenges involved in inclusive education for the gifted and talented children in Nigeria which is another major part of this paper.

### **Coping with Challenges involved in Inclusive Education for Gifted and Talented Children**

According to Nwazuke (2003), one fact which the teacher of the gifted should come to terms with, is that gifted children within inclusive educational settings have special needs, and except those needs are adequately addressed, educational programmes mounted for them (the gifted) might not be beneficial to the gifted children. He went further to say that it should be so clear to the teacher that no teacher can single-handedly address all the special needs of the gifted children. This means that the teacher must recognize the limitations of the vocational skills available to him and be ready to work cooperatively with other professional colleagues. Nwazuke further said that the essence of the cooperative approach is to imbue the gifted children with various knowledge and skills possessed by experts in different areas. It is known however, that in our school system, teachers generally make educational provision for the average students, paying little attention to the backward children and the gifted ones.

Although the National Policy on Education (1981) insists on equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nations, teachers on the average reason that gifted students do not require any special educational provision in the regular classroom because they can do well on their own. Tempest (1974) has pointed out that in so far as the individual needs of gifted children are not provided for, the gifted children can be thought of as handicapped children. Tempest does not accept the position that gifted children in regular classrooms will do well without any special attention from the teacher. He agrees that many gifted children will do well, if doing well implies being among the top four or five in achievement in the class.

It must be pointed out that a gifted child who consistently completes tasks well ahead of his class mates will in no time feel bored with the classroom environment. Unless such a child is meaningfully engaged with challenging activities, he may resort to disruptive behaviour in and out of the classroom. In order to cope with challenges involved in inclusive education for gifted and talented children, Nwazuke (2003), further stressed that the teacher should be quite open to the gifted child's unique ways of responding to stimulus. It is obvious that no single teacher can successfully meet all the unique needs of the gifted child in the classroom. The option open to the teacher is to adopt a number of strategies namely: use of community mentor, bibliotherapy, pull-out, telescoping, resource rooms, team teaching and the use of itinerant teacher, peer tutoring and a host of others. All the aforementioned strategies will now be discussed one after the other.

#### **Use of a Community Mentor**

According to Nwazuke (2003), a mentor is someone found to be very successful and accomplished in his or her talent field. Opportunities are created for gifted children



to relate with accomplished people in their various areas of interest. The essence of this is to encourage the children to model their lives on the lives of the mentors. In Nigeria, we are blessed with men and women who have distinguished themselves in the sciences and humanities, creative arts and sports. However, it is essential to note that the child's area of interest must be put into consideration while choosing the mentors to invite. What the mentor would be expected to do ranges from delivering lectures, holding symposia or workshops for the children or meeting them informally in a question – and – answer forum after the school hours.

### **Bibliotherapy**

Bibliotherapy is another instructional procedure for managing giftedness in the classroom. Swassing (1985) is of the opinion that bibliotherapy consists primarily in providing well-chosen books to the gifted learners to increase self-knowledge and self-esteem and find relieve from personal conflicts. The books to be selected for the gifted children must match their age, needs, aptitude, interests and ability levels (Swassing, 1985). As a result of this, it is expected that the classroom is big enough to accommodate classroom library where books can be kept. In no doubt, the classroom teacher would require the services of a professional librarian in this matter. It is expected that bibliotherapy would help gifted children in thinking constructively and positively while at the same time increasing their level of abstraction. One interesting thing regarding this strategy is that the children (especially in the liberal arts) tend to share the values and aspirations of the successful characters they read about in the literature and by so doing, imitate the characters.

### **Pull-Out**

Another way to manage giftedness in the classroom is through the use of mental ability grouping. According to Nwazuoke (2003), the assumption here is that children who belong to the same mental ability bracket are likely to achieve at a near uniform rate. The job of the teacher is made easy when it is known that the children have identical mental ability. In situations where there are sharp differences either in the mental ability of the children or their subject aptitude, the teacher could decide to make use of the resource room technique called pull-out. As the name implies, a gifted student who requires individualized attention is “pulled” out of the classroom and taken to the resource room to be attended to by resource room personnel who themselves express considerable expertise in the child's area of need. At the end of the period, the child is returned to his regular class to continue with the others.

It must be pointed out that in schools where the pull-out technique is used, efforts are made to equip the resource room with materials in different fields of interest as well as the relevant personnel.



### **Telescoping**

Telescoping is an instructional procedure which is related to the pull-out technique. It is a form of acceleration. Under this instructional procedure named telescoping, a child is allowed to benefit from instruction at higher levels of study at given periods of the day after which he returns to his regular class. Nwazuoke stressed that the child is granted this benefit in a subject where he has demonstrated outstanding promise or when it is known that the regular class material will look ordinary to him. Other forms of acceleration can be seen as double promotion or early admission into college. What is implied here is that the child skips a class or a grade.

Nwazuoke (1991) has suggested that instructional acceleration which sometimes amounts to grade skipping should not be the only option open to teachers. Another thing teachers can do is to enrich the curriculum by introducing study areas which are not covered by the student's programme of study. Jang (2013) describe enrichment as instructional procedure which are above and exceed regular grade level. The idea behind all this is to provide differentiated learning, which would accommodate the learning styles and unique nature of the gifted children.

### **Team Teaching and the use of Itinerant Teacher**

One other important way of coping with challenges involved in inclusive education for gifted and talented children is the use of instructional methods called team teaching as well as the use of itinerant teacher. Team teaching gifted children is a much preferred option to having just one teacher per course for the students. The various benefits derivable in team teaching the gifted child should outweigh arguments on the funding implications of such projects.

In a school system the services of an itinerant teacher can also be engaged to provide support to the classroom teacher. The duty of an itinerant teacher is to move from one school to the other instructing students on a particular specialized skill or number of skills. To this extent, the itinerant teacher is a very knowledgeable person whose expertise may not be easily sourced within the school system. The days and times the itinerant teacher is supposed to visit should be part of the overall framework in programme planning. In essence, the point being stressed is that the coming of the itinerant teacher should dovetail into the programme of the school in such a way that normalcy is not disrupted.

### **Peer Tutoring**

It is not unusual for a teacher to observe in the classroom that some students may be outstandingly superior to their fellow students in certain subject areas. Such students could be engaged to assist the teacher in teaching certain concepts to the class. Nwazuoke (1991) has described peer tutoring as a means of using some students to provide academic help to their peers. When this is done, definitely, a child who teaches his peers will no doubt feel psychologically uplifted and fulfilled that he is able to assume the



status of his teacher. Such an approach will make the student used as a tutor to develop heightened self-image, positive attitude to work and a sense of responsibility. Clark (2010) believes that the students being used as tutors consider their knowledge and expertise useful and appreciated, and to that extent, students being tutored receive necessary help.

There are other numerous strategies, which the teacher can adopt to meet the challenge of giftedness in the classroom. Notable among these strategies are synetics, experimentation, humour, unfinished stories, brainstorming, independent study, cluster/project groups, seminars and a host of others. The scope of this paper is not wide enough to warrant detailed discussion of each technique. It must be noted that whichever technique the teacher wishes to use must be suitable in meeting the needs of gifted children. It has to be pointed out again that if we actually want to meet the needs of gifted and talented children who are mingled together with other categories of exceptional children and regular children in inclusive education, their teachers must rely on a combination of the aforementioned methods.

### Conclusion

A careful look into the contribution of the gifted and talented people into the growth and development of any nation is enough to conclude that there is a strong relationship between Millennium Development Goals and inclusive education for gifted and talented children in Nigeria. Researches have shown that the gifted and the creative people are the set of people that every nation depends on for their economic and technological growth (Adelodun, 2004).

If we now relate the above assertion with Goal 7, target 9 as well as Goal 8, target 18 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is obvious that both gifted and talented education and MDGs have much in common. The aim of Goal 7, target 9 is to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources. Furthermore, Goal 8, target 18 stipulates that in cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication. Summarily, both Goal 7, target 9 and Goal 8, target 18 are also pointing to the fact that part of the Millennium Development Goals are to see to it that all 193 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations would have developed both economically and technologically by the year 2015 just like gifted and creative people are striving to achieve this same goal.

The relationship between inclusive education for gifted and talented children and Millennium Development Goals could again be traced to the recommendations made by United Nations Enable (2013) on disability and MDGs. Since people with disabilities are exceptional people just like gifted and talented persons, it stands to reason that the gifted and talented people are not left out while United Nations Enable (2013) were making recommendations on disability and MDGs. The recommendations are as follows:



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- The Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without the full and effective inclusion of persons with disabilities and their participation in all stages of the MDGs processes.
- The current MDGs framework, tools and mechanisms provide several opportunities to mainstream disability in the MDGs.
- The existing data gaps on disability within the context of the MDGs evaluation and monitoring continues to be a major challenge. Available data, could be used to support the inclusion of disability in current MDG evaluation and monitoring processes, while on-going and new MDG evaluation and monitoring efforts should add a disability component as part of their overall data collection endeavours.
- Specific measures should be taken for mainstreaming disability at global, regional and national levels for short-term, medium-term and long-term results.
- With a view to the 2010 periodic review, priority should be given at this time to targeting actions at the global level in the context of monitoring.
- Collaborations should be initiated within the United Nations system and with relevant stakeholders to foster strategic thinking and planning on the MDGs and disability. In this regard, establishing an informal resource group could ensure that a platform for on-going dialogue and feedback is possible.

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