

# The Twelfth International Dabrowski Congress

July 14 -16, 2016

Sheraton Calgary Cavalier Hotel

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

[www.dabrowskicongress.com](http://www.dabrowskicongress.com)

*“Dynamisms: Forces for Human Growth”*



An interdisciplinary conference on Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration

- development/personal story, methods/theory, practical application, gifted



# Conference Program

Thursday, July 14, 2016

Thursday, 1:30 - 2:30 pm  
On-Site Registration Open,  
Room: *Foyer*

Thursday, 2:30 pm - 5:30 pm  
Pre-Congress Workshop "*Dabrowski 101*"

Laurence Nixon, Ph.D., professor at Dawson College in Montreal, Quebec, Canada and Dabrowski Specialist.  
Room: *Sheraton South*

If you are a relative newcomer to Dabrowski's work or would like a refresher experience, this pre-congress workshop will be a helpful precursor to the more in-depth and diverse work to be discussed during the congress.

**Laurence Nixon, PhD**, is a professor at Dawson College in Montreal, where he offers courses in social science research methods and in the sacred texts, rituals, religious experiences, art and architecture of the major religious traditions of the world looked at from the perspective of the social sciences and art history. His first encounter with the theory of positive disintegration was through the chance discovery, in the late 1970s, of *Positive Disintegration* at a Buddhist garage sale in Montreal and then, shortly afterwards, of *Mental Growth Through Positive Disintegration* in a secondhand bookstore in the same city. This led Nixon to contact one of the co-authors of the last-mentioned work, Andrew Kawczak (then chair of the Philosophy Department at Concordia University in Montreal), who agreed to conduct a seminar in the theory (for Nixon and other graduate students). Nixon made use of the theory of positive disintegration in both his Master's Thesis (a survey of empirical studies of meditation) and his Ph.D. dissertation (an analysis of the period of spiritual struggle experienced by mystics from a great variety of religious traditions). Subsequently he examined various aspects of the theory, and the application of the theory to religious and creative lives, in conference papers, journal articles, and contributions to the *Dabrowski Newsletter*. He has also delivered papers and published articles and book reviews in the history, psychology, anthropology and sociology of religion.

Thursday, 4:00 - 5:00 pm  
On-site Registration Open  
Room: *Foyer*

Thursday, 5:30 pm  
Reception: Wine & Cheese/Cash Bar  
Room: *Sheraton East/West*  
Entertainment - Susan Picard

Thursday, 6:00 pm

**CONFERENCE OPENING**

**Welcome and Introductions** - Janneke Frank and Krystyna Laycraft

**Room:** *Sheraton East/West*

Poster Sessions Open

*DINNER ON YOUR OWN*

## Presentation Schedule

Friday, July 15, 2016

Friday, 8:00 am

**On-site Registration**

**Room:** *Foyer*

Friday, 8:45 am - 9:00 am

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Room:** *Sheraton Ballroom*

**Hosts:** Janneke Frank and Krystyna Laycraft

Friday, 9:00 am - 10:00 am

**Keynote Address:** *Dynamisms: Shapers of Development and Psychological Constructs*

Sal Mendaglio, PhD, University of Calgary

**Room:** Sheraton Ballroom

Dynamisms are the intra psychic factors of positive disintegration, which is the destruction of lower forms of human functioning and replacement of them with higher forms. This dual process is accomplished by disintegrating and developmental dynamisms respectively. Dynamisms explain Dabrowskian development, in fact, dynamisms are development.

In my view, they serve another important, ancillary function: re-consideration of the meaning of common psychological constructs such as self-concept/self-esteem, intelligence and personality. From a positive disintegration perspective, the importance attributed to positive self-concept and self-esteem requires rethinking. Experience of disintegrating dynamisms such as dissatisfaction with oneself produce emotions that are not correlates of self-esteem. Intelligence which has occupied a paramount role in psychology, is relegated not only to secondary status, but also subservient to level of development. Personality, unlike its depiction in psychology as universal and given, is a rare achievement by developmental dynamisms.

In this session, I explore both the preeminent and ancillary roles of dynamisms in the theory of positive disintegration.

**Sal Mendaglio, PhD**, Counselling Psychology, Professor, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary.

Dr. Mendaglio, born in Italy, spent his youth in Montreal. He is married with three daughters and a son. His education includes: BA in psychology, St Francis Xavier, 1967; MEd in counseling, McGill University, 1972, PhD in counselling psychology, University of Toronto, 1976. Sal joined the counselling psychology program in 1976. In 1995, Sal moved to offering graduate and undergraduate courses in education. Sal's area of passion has been the psychology of giftedness with particular emphasis on counseling gifted individuals. Currently he is teaching in the education undergraduate program and graduate courses in leadership and gifted education in the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary. Dr. Mendaglio's research focuses on the psychology of giftedness and the theory of positive disintegration.

**Friday, 10:00 am - 10:30 am**

**REFRESHMENT BREAK**

**Friday, 10:30-11:30 am**

### **Assessing Dabrowski's Levels of Development**

Nancy Miller, PhD, Gifted Development Center, Denver, CO.

Methods/Theories

**Sheraton South**

This presentation will focus on the characteristics, qualities, and values of persons at higher levels of Development according to Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration. Dabrowski labeled levels III, IV, and V as higher or multilevel development, differentiating them from levels I and II, which he called lower or unilevel development. We will consider what distinguishes those at higher levels of development, including the role that dynamisms play. A content analysis coding system will be introduced that categorizes written material based on an individual's values, conception of self, and relations with others. Examples of case material will be used to illustrate typical responses to questions on the Definition Response Instrument. Finally, case studies, referred to as "moral exemplars," of those who demonstrate advanced development in their lives will be presented and discussed.

**Nancy B. Miller, PhD**, is editor of *Advanced Development*, a journal on adult giftedness, and currently does research and testing at the Gifted Development Center in Denver, Colorado. She has taught at the University of Denver and the University of Akron. From 2002-2006, she served as Executive Officer of Sociologist for Women in Society. She discovered Dabrowski's theory as a graduate student and has pursued an interest in the theory throughout her career. Her numerous publications focus on emotional development, gender and giftedness, women's social support and adjustment to stressful life events, and family processes.

**Friday, 10:30 am - 11:30 am**

**Crisis/Trauma: Opportunity for Growth**

Jacquie Aitken-Kish, BA, BSW, RSW Executive Director of Pace Community Support, Sexual Assault and Trauma Centre, Edmonton, AB

Development/Personal Story

**Room:** *Sheraton E/W*

Dr. Marlene Rankell was the first clinical supervisor at Pace and taught our staff to understand victim and offender issues using Dabrowski's Theory of Multi Level Disintegration. All trauma material coming forward now is presenting the reality of victims' emotional sensitivity, leaving them vulnerable to further abuse, depression, freeze, fight, flight response, addiction, self harm etc. as we work with people in crisis we use the opportunity to teach self care, the ability to tolerate feeling including sadness, loss, hurt, betrayal etc. As clients process trauma they learn that they may be a victim at one point in their life, survive the physical part of the abuse and have the opportunity to move to living, taking back their power and taking control and responsibility for their life. Crisis/trauma/abuse can give us knowledge of the strength of the human spirit, compassion and the healing process from a cellular level. This workshop will present the use Dabrowski's theory to determine interventions required to support the emotional growth of individuals in crisis.

**Jacquie Aitken-Kish BA, BSW, RSW**, Executive Director of Pace Community Support, Sexual Assault and Trauma Centre. Jacquie has worked with issues of family violence since 1980, when she served as the Executive Director of the third shelter for battered women to open in Alberta. As one of the founding members of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, the Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centers, and the Grande Prairie and Area Prevention of Family Violence Network, she has served on numerous committees and working groups at the local, regional and provincial level to ensure best practice in dealing with both victims and offenders. Since 1987, Jacquie has been the Executive Director of Pace. She has provided direct therapeutic interventions with victims and offenders of psychological abuse, and physical and sexual violence. A strong believer in collaboration Jacquie's assistance and/or partnerships with agencies and communities across the region to better address client and community needs has given rise to services such as the Community Critical Response Team, the Grande Prairie Caribou Centre for supporting child and youth victims of crime (the second Child Advocacy Centre to open in Alberta), and High Prairie and Peace River therapy services to adult and child victims of sexual assault and children exposed to domestic violence.

**Friday, 10:30 am - 11:30 am**

**Gifted Learners: perfectionism & anxiety through a Dabrowskian lens**

Laurie Alisat, PhD, Specialist for Gifted Education, Calgary Board of Education

Development/Personal Story

**Room:** Canadian Room

Gifted learners live in the world with intensity. Not only does this impact their learning, but also their relationships with family, peers and others, as well as their self-esteem. Using Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration, perfectionism and anxiety as observed, will be explored with the goals of: understanding the underlying motivations and identifying the variety of strategies the individual can employ, as she works through her thinking and experiencing of them. Dabrowski's theory suggests these paralyzing behaviours are a clash of values, which provide an opportunity for personal growth. With that in mind the question is posed, how can we,

both as individuals and as a society, use Dabrowski's ideas to reframe our negative view of perfectionism and anxiety to free and empower the individual, giving her strength in approaching future learning and life challenges?

**Laurie Alisat, PhD**, is a Specialist for Gifted Education with the Calgary Board of Education. She has worked with gifted students as a classroom teacher in both community and specialized settings. As well, she has worked with teachers as a System Strategist for gifted learners and as an Instructor at the University of Calgary in Inclusive Learning and the Development of Creativity. Working with Dr. Robert Kelly, she assisted in interviewing and writing, *Educating for Creativity: A Global Conversation*. Laurie has presented numerous talks about gifted learners at conventions, symposiums, congresses, schools, and parent groups. Her recent research focused on the experience of schooling for gifted boys in alternative settings. Laurie is passionate about appropriate meaningful challenge for students, through compassionate relationships, to build confidence and resiliency.

Friday, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

LUNCH

Sheraton Ballroom

Friday, 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

**Signature Session: *Dabrowski's Approach to Testing: An Introduction***

Bill Tillier

**Room:** *Sheraton Ballroom*

Over many years, Dąbrowski developed several different approaches to assess development and emotion in clients. Some of these approaches used conventional tests, others used questionnaires of various designs. Some tests were relatively unique, especially as applied by Dąbrowski. Unfortunately, these materials are unpublished and are virtually unknown today.

This presentation will introduce Dąbrowski's rationale for testing and summarize the various tests Dąbrowski used or developed. His Situations test and FACES test will be highlighted. One may think that a physiological approach is out of date, but on the contrary, this is a very active contemporary research topic in psychology.

**Bill Tillier** was a student of Dr. Dabrowski while completing his Master of Science at the University of Alberta. Over the years, Bill developed a tremendous appreciation for many aspects of Dr. Dąbrowski and his work. He has helped organize conferences and has made a number of presentations, including several focused on the foundations of Dabrowski's theory in Plato, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and more recently Bergson. One of Bill's proudest moments came when Dąbrowski, late in his life, asked Bill to keep his theory alive after his passing. Bill has honored Dr. Dabrowski's request through the Dąbrowski website and the dissemination of his original writings. Bill was a forensic psychologist in his career for 24 years. He is now retired but maintains up-to-date and extensive databases on a number of topics including science and health issues, the theory of positive disintegration, Abraham Maslow, positive psychology, psychopathy and most recently, on epigenetics and cancer. Bill's passion and pleasure is to assist students in their pursuit of knowledge.

Friday, 1:30 pm - 2:00 pm

## REFRESHMENT BREAK

Friday, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

### **Using Dabrowski's TPD dynamisms to determine personality development in gifted, highly sensitive adults**

Marie-Lise Schläppy PhD, University of the Highlands and Islands

Methods and Theory

**Room:** *Sheraton South*

Persons with overexcitabilities (EOIs) have, according to K. Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration (TPD), a high development potential. In this study, gifted adults belonging to the MENSA were asked to volunteer for a study on high sensitivity and development levels according to the TPD by Dabrowski. Seven adults with known IQs took part in a survey on high sensitivity. TPD's development levels were measured using the Definition Response Instrument (DRI) by Gage et al. (1981). The answers to the DRI questionnaire were analyzed by looking for Dabrowski's dynamisms and recording which level of development they corresponded to. The most common dynamisms were "subject-object" of level IV and "dissatisfaction with oneself" of level III. The average level score given by the dynamisms was positively correlated to the HSP scale score and the IQ score. The results suggest that not only giftedness but high sensitivity coupled to giftedness is a good predictor of development potential.

Friday, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

### **Walking in Another's Shoes: A personal account of the blessing and curse of intense empathy as a force for personal growth**

Fiona Smith, psychologist and counsellor, Sydney, Australia

Development/Personal Story

**Room:** *Sheraton E/W*

This presentation aims to outline my own battle with 'reactive empathy' as a psychologist specializing in working with gifted individuals. I will argue that while empathy is essential to me for building rapport so that I can best understand, support, and effectively assess and counsel my clients there is a flip side to the coin. Intense reactive empathy is debilitating at a personal, even physiological level. Within Dabrowski's TPD dynamisms are seen to drive the process of positive disintegration and assist in actualizing an individual's endowment of developmental potential. I will attempt to explain how my experience of empathy has 'sparked changes', working as a dynamism by 'shattering' my perceptions and attitudes toward myself, and my social and working environments and forcing me to change and grow.

**Fiona Smith is an Australian psychologist and counsellor** working in private practice in Sydney carrying out psychometric assessments with gifted children and consulting on parenting and educational issues. She has tested over 3000 individuals and has almost twenty years' experience in the field. Fiona has presented at SENG and at NAGC as well at conferences, symposiums and Professional Development workshops all over Australia.

**Friday, 2:00 pm - 2:30 pm (dual session)**  
**Positive disintegration through loss of spouse**

Barry Kennedy, MSEE, Consultant  
Development/Personal Story

**Canadian Room**

How framing yourself with a positive learning mindset like a growing developing power system through creative expression and meditation results in positive disintegration and post traumatic growth after the loss of a spouse of many years.

**Barry Kennedy, MSEE**, consultant, lost his wife of 50 years. He relates his post-loss experience through Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration.

**Friday, 2:30 pm - 3:00 pm (second session)**

**Developing Student Leadership Skills: The Calgary Homeless Project**

Jennifer Eiserman, PhD, University of Calgary and Heather Lai, teacher, Westmount Charter School  
Gifted

**Room:** *Canadian Room*

Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration suggests gifted children have heightened empathy due to their emotional overexcitabilities. Twenty-five grade five gifted students explored homelessness to address this developmental need. The children were introduced to homelessness through the film, "Inocente," about a homeless youth whose engagement in art built her confidence to overcome her situation. Students researched the working poor and homeless, visiting a homeless shelter, interviewing workers at the shelter to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. They represented the knowledge they gained, and the feelings that these experiences generated, through visual and performing arts. They synthesized their learning by designing a portable habitation to meet the physical and affective needs of the homeless. "The Calgary Homeless Project" illustrates how engaging gifted students creatively can utilize and support the development of their empathy skills.

**Jennifer Eiserman, PhD**, Associate Professor, Department of Art, Faculty of Arts, University of Calgary  
**Heather Lai**, teacher, Westmount Charter School for gifted, Calgary, AB

**Friday, 3:00 pm - 3:30 pm**

**REFRESHMENT BREAK**

**Friday, 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm**

**Patterns in Multi-Generations of Gifted Adults**

Norma Hafenstein, PhD, University of Denver, Co. and Julia Watson, PhD, University of Denver, CO  
Methods/Theory

**Room:** *Sheraton South*

The critical nature of dynamisms is addressed in Dabrowski's third factor of development. Through a pilot study administering both the OEQ-II Inventory and the Revised Overexcitability Questionnaire to gifted adults from three generations, patterns were revealed in the emotional, intellectual, psychomotor, sensual, and imaginal

realms. Narrative comments also revealed concepts of dynamism in second and third generation responses that indicated self-reflection, consideration of universal priorities, and concern for the future. With advanced development, dynamisms increasingly reflect movement toward autonomy while emotional reactions guide the individual in creating his or her individual personality. Preliminary results include evidence of consistency between Inventory and Questionnaire results in the area of emotional overexcitability. However, large numerical discrepancies occurred in the areas of sensual and psychomotor overexcitabilities. Review of this study, methodology, preliminary results, and future considerations for research will be presented. Implications are present for psychology and education.

**Dr. Norma Hafenstein** is the Ricks Endowed Chair of Gifted Education and Director of the Institute for the Development of Gifted Education (IDGE) at the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver, CO. As Clinical Professor in the Curriculum, Studies and Teaching Department, Norma is Lead Faculty for the Gifted Education program, advising master's- and doctoral-degree students in education of the gifted and teaching graduate courses as well as serving on Colorado State Department of Education project and advisory committees. Dr. Hafenstein was the recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award from Emporia State University in 2012. She received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented in 2006. In 2005, Norma was presented with the Founder's Day Distinguished Service to the University Award.

**Dr. Julia Watson's** experience in education spans 40 years, from K-college teacher to gifted and talented specialist, administrator, staff developer, and assessment specialist. She currently works as Research Project Coordinator (IDGE) and Adjunct Professor (MCE) at University of Denver and Gifted Education Regional Consultant for the Colorado Department of Education.

**Friday, 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm**

**TPD as a Journey Through Feelings: How to read my children's book**

Krystyna Laycraft, PhD, The Center for CHAOS Studies

Development/Personal Story

**Room:** *Sheraton E/W*

In this talk, I introduce my children's book "A Journey through the Land of Feelings." In this book, a journey through feelings represents metaphorically the psychological growth of a young girl. It is shown that emotional factors such as internal conflicts, striving for acceptance and friendship, genuine concerns for others, openness to the external world and true empathy play a dominant role in the psychological growth of this young girl. During her journey, she goes through the spontaneous multilevel disintegration and experiences a variety of dynamisms such as astonishment with herself, dissatisfaction with herself, guilt, positive maladjustment, and empathy.

This book can be a very useful tool for parents and educators to teach children how to identify their emotions, how to respond to challenging situations that evoke negative emotions such as fear, rejection, and anger, and how to embrace positive emotions such as acceptance, anticipation, interest and joy. Illustrations and stories in this book may stimulate children's imagination, encourage them to explore and to make their own decisions, and then accelerate their emotional and social development.

**Krystyna Laycraft, PhD**, physicist, educator, artist. She runs the Center of Chaos Studies and KL Emotional Consulting. Krystyna delivers seminars and workshops on emotional needs and psychological development of adolescents and adults, the role of creativity in their psychological development and the process of decision-making. For more information on her work and teaching, access: [www.krystyna-laycraft.com](http://www.krystyna-laycraft.com)

Friday, 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

**The dynamic of possibilities and limitations: How these opposites fuel the essence of development**

Jonathon T. Huckvale, MBA

Methods/Theory

**Room:** *Canadian Room*

The differences between consciousness and sub-consciousness have been widely discussed in the psychoanalytical, behavioral, and humanistic psychology fields with scholars such as Dabrowski, Jung and Maslow each contributing their unique perspectives. However, is there is an “absolute” moral code or divine law that all individuals seeking higher development must become aware of and submit to while still pursuing a unique and individualized path?

My paper addresses the dynamic of possibilities and limitations with special attention to how these opposites fuel the essence of development. I will be looking at how understanding limits and boundaries are essential to expanding consciousness. I will evaluate works by Jung and Maslow, and juxtapose them against Dabrowski’s theory. I argue that divine law is not subjective but rather universal and all individuals are capable of experiencing a fullness of joy within their dimension or sphere. In conclusion, this project sheds new light on the neglected issue of the role of divine law and spirituality play in comprehending the opposites of consciousness and sub-consciousness as a dynamic force for human growth.

**Jonathon T. Huckvale, MBA**, HR consultant. In previous work with such notable companies as Apple, Google, Microsoft and Intel, he began to formulate his own ideas and theories on how to identify and utilize the talents of the “gifted.” Jonathon has been deeply affected by TPD; it has become a sacred part of his life. He has a passion for wisdom and knowledge and enjoy reading and participating in occult/metaphysical circles in the pacific northwest United States.

Friday, 4:30 pm – 6:00 pm

**BREAK and CONNECTION TIME**

Friday, 6:00 pm

**Reception: Hors d’oeuvres/Cash Bar**

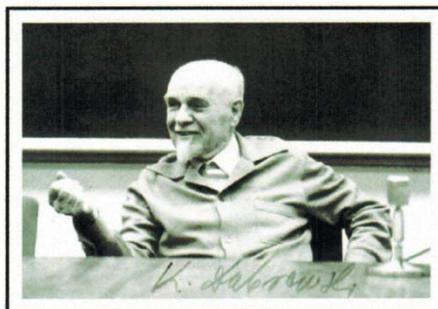
**Entertainment** (Susan Picard)

**Room:** *Sheraton Ballroom*

Friday, 6:30 pm

**Room:** *Sheraton Ballroom*

**DINNER**



Dr. Kazimierz Dabrowski

# Presentation Schedule

Saturday, July 16, 2016

Saturday, 8:00 am

Registration

Room: *Foyer*

Saturday, 8:45 am - 9:00 am

Welcome and Announcements - Janneke Frank and Krystyna Laycraft

Room: *Sheraton Ballroom*

Saturday, 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Signature Session: *Dabrowski's Interest in Gifted* - Linda Silverman, PhD, Frank Falk, PhD, Paul McGaffey, PhD

Room: *Sheraton Ballroom*

“When Dabrowski encountered me on a sunny campus street in 1967 and graciously asked me to be an associate of his, I was gobsmacked. Only later did I see that he treated all with this elaborate and genuine courtesy. In any case my estimate of myself went up; this rise in self-worth was a universal experience for those who enjoyed his arresting attention and nuclear energy. I loved him from the moment he picked up our almost 2-year old first-born, Mara, and gave her the benediction of his pleasure at her open gaze; no stranger-danger at all from our reticent daughter.” Paul McGaffey had the pleasure of working with Kazimierz Dabrowski and Marlene Rankel for 5 ½ years. In 1968, Dabrowski constructed a series of grant proposals, which Paul collected. In this session, we will discuss primary source materials containing Dabrowski’s hypotheses about accelerated development in the highly gifted.

**Paul McGaffey, PhD, (ABD) psychologist**, is the father of eight children with his lover-wife Dolores. For more than five years, Paul worked closely with Marlene Rankel and less frequently with Dr. Kazimierz Dabrowski. He admired both of them immensely. On the side, he’s also a screen actor, life-member of ACTRA, with an agent here in Calgary. Farther down the side - still practicing to get it right, he’s a PhD(ABD) psychologist specializing in unconventionally-wired brains - assessment & treatment. When Paul teaches, Dabrowski’s brand shows clearly. He’s a life-long learner; recent learning involves jousting with pieces of tree spinning at high speed on a lathe. No kidding, he’s a serious fellow.

**Linda Kreger Silverman, PhD**, is a licensed clinical and counseling psychologist. She founded *Advanced Development*, the first journal on adult giftedness, redefining giftedness according to the principles of Dabrowski’s theory. She founded and directs the Institute for the Study of Advanced Development (ISAD), and its subsidiaries, the Gifted Development Center [[www.gifteddevelopment.com](http://www.gifteddevelopment.com)] and Visual-Spatial Resource [[www.visualspatial.org](http://www.visualspatial.org)], in Denver, Colorado. She has studied the psychology and education of the gifted since 1961 and has contributed over 300 articles, chapters and books, including *Counseling the Gifted and Talented*, *Upside-Down Brilliance: The Visual-Spatial Learner*, *Advanced Development: A Collection of Works on Gifted Adults* and *Giftedness 101*.

**R. Frank Falk, PhD**, serves as Director of Research for The Institute for the Study of Advanced Development in Denver, CO. For many years he taught and served as an administrator at both the University of Denver and the University of Akron. He has authored numerous books, monographs, chapters, and peer-reviewed journal articles. His current publications involve the measurement of overexcitabilities in Dabrowski's theory. He has recently completed a children's version of the Overexcitability Questionnaire (OEQ-IIC), and a new version of the manual for the Overexcitability Questionnaire (OEQ) and the Overexcitability Questionnaire-Two (OEQ-II). All are available at the Institute for the Study of Advanced Development.

**Saturday, 10:00 am - 10:30 am**

**REFRESHMENT BREAK**

**Saturday, 10:30 am - 11:30 am**

**Dynamisms and Bright Adults: Across the Lifespan**

Ellen Fiedler, PhD, Northeastern Illinois University/Wins for Education, Inc.

Gifted

**Room:** *Sheraton South*

What is life's journey like for bright adults? What impact does being bright have on charting a course through life? How do the factors described in Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD), including both the levels and the dynamisms, affect them during each age and stage of life, from their 20s and 30s through their 40s, 50s, and 60s? What about their elder years?

Developing understanding of the dynamisms can benefit bright adults as they make their way across the lifespan and encounter stormy seas and troubled waters. Given that the dynamisms are varied depending on the levels as described in TPD as well as on the individual's age/stage of life, understanding their potential impact can be beneficial. Implications for bright adults of all ages who may not be aware of the dynamisms and how they can affect their journey across the lifespan are worth considering.

**Ellen Fiedler, PhD**, Northeastern Illinois University/Wins for Education/Inc. Dr. Ellen D. Fiedler is a Professor Emerita of Gifted Education from Northeastern Illinois University, has a Ph.D. in Counseling and Guidance, an M.S.E. in education, and has been a Gifted Program Coordinator and a State Consultant for Gifted. She is the author of *Bright Adults: Uniqueness and Belonging Across the Lifespan* and a handful of chapters in edited books including chapters on gifted adults in *Off the Charts: Asynchrony and the Gifted Child* and in *Living with Intensity*. She has published dozens of articles in professional journals, regularly presents at state, national, and international conferences and has done a number of webinars on gifted students and adults as well as providing consultation services for school districts and parents in the U. S. and internationally.

**Saturday, 10:30 am - 11:30 am**

**Dynamisms in influencing risk taking and resilience in students who are gifted**

Janneke Frank, PhD, Emily Wang, PhD, and David Holland, teacher

Gifted

**Room:** *Sheraton E/W*

From a Dabrowskian perspective, realizing one's developmental potential is not easy or straightforward. The process stipulates that individuals reconcile enormous incongruities in their lives, and autonomously map their individual authentic paths with respect for others in complex contexts. Wrestling meaning from a world filled with apparent chaos, contradiction, and trauma demands a vast investment of emotional and intellectual energy. A logical implication for the Theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD) would be to consider how important resilience would be for an individual who is coming to grips with a multi-level existence, particularly as a gifted youth. Similarly, using the Neurosequential Model in Education (NME) to better understand how the brain functions and how the role of significant adults impacts relationships with gifted youth is critical in fostering resilience through self-regulation. Are dynamisms the forces that encourage self-regulation and resilience? How could dynamisms function in relationships between significant others and adolescents dealing with the initial or periodic stressors experienced during spontaneous multi-level disintegrations? How might it look in a situation where these disintegrations take place, specifically in a high school classroom? This interactive session will explore questions about who supportive adults need to be, what they need to know, and how they need to act to effectively serve gifted youth.

**Janneke Frank, PhD**, Principal, Westmount Charter School for gifted students and Consultant, Gifted Endeavours and **Emily Wang, PhD**, Clinical Psychologist and Director of Trauma Informed Services with Hull Services, Calgary; Fellow with the Child Trauma Academy and **David Holland**, teacher at Westmount Charter School and former Gifted Education Specialist, Calgary Board of Education.

**Saturday, 10:30 am - 11:30 am**

**Dynamic of the feeling of shame**

Anita Benislawska, PhD, Independent

Development/Personal Story

**Room:** *Canadian Room*

The feeling of shame is a dynamism of development which usually stays in the shadow of the leading dynamisms such as the third factor or the subject-object in oneself. It is a dynamism associated with the feeling of guilt which is interpreted as its higher level.

The feeling of shame is a very important but dismissive dynamism. People claimed the feeling of shame only as a destructive emotion while it is a crucial dynamism of overcoming between the unilevel disintegration and the multilevel disintegration. It is meaningful in creation of a room for development of an internal world.

The feeling of shame on the lower level is responsible for a tendency to separation and a dependence on others as a mean of communication as well as a tool of intuition. Higher level of the development helps you discover freedom, and to teach self-assessment. It means the feeling of shame has not only social and moral but also existential and essential meaning.

Saturday, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Room: *Sheraton Ballroom*

LUNCH

Saturday, 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

**The Theory of Positive Disintegration and the Highly Sensitive Person: Dynamisms at Work**

Tracy Cooper, PhD, California Institute of Integral Studies and Marie-Lise Schläppy, PhD, University of the Highlands and Islands

Methods/Theory

Room: *Sheraton South*

A presumptive link has existed between highly sensitive people (HSPs), or those with the personality trait sensory processing sensitivity, and high developmental potential as defined by Kazimierz Dabrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration. This study presents the first empirical evidence of such a link and explores the implications of dynamisms as revealed in a first of its kind survey utilizing the Overexcitability Questionnaire 2 given to 1,246 survey respondents (all highly sensitive people) indicating significant correlations to high OE in the emotional, intellectual, and imaginational categories. Dabrowski defined these as the "big three" most necessary for advanced development.

Combined with emotionality (the trigger mechanism for the trait) these three OEs seem to indicate the presence of Dabrowskian dynamisms influencing and contributing to advanced personality development through the disintegrative-reintegrative process. Additional empirical evidence is presented indicating a strong drive toward autonomous realization of human authenticity.

**Tracy Cooper, PhD**, received his doctorate of philosophy in Transformative Studies in 2014 from the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, CA. He appeared in the documentary movie *Sensitive – The Untold Story* with many other researchers who are actively exploring the personality trait Sensory Processing Sensitivity. His expertise on HSPs and careers has led him to practice one on one consulting with HSPs in career crisis or transition. He currently teaches graduate courses at Baker University part-time, founded Invictus Publishing, LLC, and continues to conduct new research, most recently into the high sensation seeking highly sensitive person. He lives in the Springfield, Missouri metro area with his wife, Lisa, and son, Ben. His blog and further information may be found at his web site: [www.drtracycooper.com](http://www.drtracycooper.com)

**Marie-Lise Schläppy, PhD**, has a background in special education /gifted pedagogy and biology. She is interested in research questions relating to the relationship between giftedness, sensory processing sensitivity (high sensitivity), scotopic sensitivity (Irlen syndrome) and in the light of the theory of positive disintegration by K. Dabrowski. Dr Schläppy is teaching those subjects in adult development courses and further education for school teachers. She is looking for research collaborations on those subjects, especially if the research is about adults and older people. For further information, please contact her through the contact page at [www.surchauffe-dubulbe.net](http://www.surchauffe-dubulbe.net).

**Saturday, 12:30 pm - 1:00 pm (dual session)**

**Instruments of Empathy: How they measure up against Dąbrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration**

Amanda Harper, PhD candidate, University of Tasmania, Australia

Methods/Theory

**Room:** *Sheraton E/W*

There are many free and commercially available instruments that purport to measure empathy or constructs of empathy. This presentation will offer an analysis of a number of these, looking at the constructs within the instruments themselves and the reliability and validity testing that underpins their development. The findings from this meta-analysis will then be assessed against Dąbrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration in an attempt to determine the degree to which empathy instruments 'measure up' against the dynamisms of Syntony and Empathy as outlined within Dąbrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration.

**Saturday, 1:00 pm - 1:30 pm (second half)**

**Through the Dąbrowski lens: An analysis of preliminary findings for empathy and academic self-concept in undergraduate health care students from the University of Tasmania, Australia**

Amanda Harper, PhD candidate, University of Tasmania, Australia

Methods/Theory

**Room:** *Sheraton E/W*

This presentation will share preliminary results from a PhD study at the School of Medicine, University of Tasmania. The study is examining the place of gifted education pedagogy, specifically Dąbrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration, in clinical skills acquisition, focusing on the development of empathy, in undergraduate health care students. The study will gather quantitative information using the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (an empathy scale) and the Self-Description Questionnaire III (academic self-concept scale) from undergraduate pharmacy, para-medicine and medicine students. The preliminary findings from this study will be presented and discussed with reference to the dynamisms of Syntony and Empathy as outlined within Dąbrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration.

**Amanda Harper is a PhD candidate** with the University of Tasmania, Australia under the supervision of Dr. Christine Clifford and Professor John Burgess. Having been an educator for many years, beginning as a classroom music teacher, Amanda first encountered Dąbrowski's Theory of Positive Disintegration while studying her Master of Education (Honours) (Gifted Education) and there is no doubt the TPD has had a massive impact on her life. The understanding of empathy within the TPD has been a common thread throughout both her Masters and Doctoral studies. Amanda is thrilled to return to Canada for her second Congress and to continue working with, and learning from, Dąbrowski's Theory.

**Saturday, 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm**

**Returning Home: Finding the Light Within**

Michele Kane, EdD, Northeastern Illinois University

Gifted

**Room:** *Canadian Room*

A central theme in the Theory of Positive Disintegration is the disintegrative process. Lived experiences provide a window into the journey of positive disintegration. Significant milestones during the life passages of a gifted adult will be presented. This personal narrative relates the hardships endured while the personality crumbled as well as the joy of rekindling the spirit. Other results of the semi-structured interviews provide insight into the role of dynamisms, specifically auto-psychotherapy and auto-education.

**Michele Kane, EdD**, is a Professor of Special Education at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago where she coordinates the Master of Arts in Gifted Education Program. Michele currently serves on the Parent Editorial and Content Advisory Board for the National Association for Gifted Children, is past-president of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children and is a contributing author to *Living with Intensity, Off the Charts: Asynchrony and the Gifted Child* and *Extending Literacy for Diverse Students*. Inspired by her experience raising six gifted children, a major focus of Michele's work is related to the lived experiences of gifted individuals, social and emotional needs of gifted, parenting gifted children, spirituality and giftedness, affective curriculum, and career development across the lifespan. She has been devoted to exploring Dabrowski's work since her attending her first workshop in 1993.

**Saturday 1:30 pm - 2:00 pm**

**REFRESHMENT BREAK**

**Saturday, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

**Dynamisms and the Demand of Non-Academic Data**

Trevor J. Tebbs, PhD, University of Connecticut

Practical Application

**Room:** *Sheraton South*

In the realm of education, while traditional, readily quantifiable academic data remains the mindless arbiter of success or 'failure', demands for more mindful assessment using *non-academic* data or *non-cognitive* skills grow ever more insistent. After almost twenty years spent in clinical and educational settings identifying, observing and contributing to the management of positive and *negative* influences on human growth associated with dynamisms, this scenario raises important questions. One such question relates to the desirability, probability and practicality of rendering forces fundamental to TPD *combined with* OE better known, understood and universally accepted in psycho-educational fields of interest. In this context, and with specific reference to highly able young people, this presentation focusses on how significant elements of OE/TPD may be incorporated into a *holistic* and *technologically* supported approach to assessment. The presentation is deliberately exploratory, designed to prompt thought and initiate action.

**Trevor J. Tebbs, PhD**, is a veteran educator living in New England with more than 45 years of experience. Being trained and certified to teach all ages in schools in the UK he worked in regular and special educational settings K12. He also served as vice principal in a school dedicated to children with special needs. After a period of

research in the USA in the late 1980s he and his family moved to Vermont. During the 1990s he entered the Educational Psychology program at the University of Connecticut, where, while studying with Dr. Renzulli and his team at the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, he first encountered Dabrowski's work. Both as a graduate assistant and after he received his Doctorate in Educational Psychology he welcomed the opportunity to work with highly able students as Associate Director of the UConn Honors Program. The Theory of Positive Disintegration was always an important feature of the counseling and teaching provided as part of the Honors program. For the last decade he has been working in private practice with individuals of all ages who often don't quite fit the accepted mold and usually present highly complex academic and social emotional problems. Again Dabrowski's work has always remained an important feature of his teaching, counseling and psychological work.

Trevor was assistant editor of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC) journal Gifted and Talented International (GTI). Presently he is also an Associate Editor of the International Journal for Talent Development and Creativity (IJTDC). For the past eight years Trevor has been refining a holistic approach to the assessment of highly able young people. A computer-aided system supportive of this approach has been developed in conjunction with a team of educators, psychologists and software engineers associated with the Ukrainian Institute of Gifted Child. The system is designed to create holistic visual profiles of individuals designed to help professionals optimize the efficacy of assessment and intervention across a wide array of needs. (See: [chandelierassessments.com](http://chandelierassessments.com))

**Saturday, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

**Exploring Dynamisms Using Personal Narratives**

Christiane Wells, MSW, PhD candidate, Walden University

Practical Application

**Room:** *Sheraton E/W*

The presenter's autoethnography about life with twice-exceptionality provided the basis for this session introducing autoethnography as a tool for growth and meaning-making. Topics will include identification of dynamisms and tensions from ongoing content analysis such as the contrast between the writer's narratives and perceptions compared to the attitudes of mental health professionals (as documented in medical records). Participants will learn about the practical application of research methods to examine personal reflective texts, such as journals and letters, through multiple frameworks including the theory of positive disintegration and relational-cultural theory. This presentation is a call-to-action for others who have accumulated substantial amounts of personal writing throughout the lifespan to help in the creation of a categorization dictionary based on these concepts. An example of the current dictionary will be given using QDA Miner/WordStat, emphasizing the application of Dabrowski's theory to content analysis.

**Christiane Wells, MSW** is a doctoral candidate in educational psychology at Walden University and lives with her husband and ten-year-old son in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, USA. Her dissertation topic is a phenomenological exploration of the experience of parenting stress in parents of twice-exceptional children. Her research interests include stress, coping, and meaning-making, the construct of giftedness, and developmental potential.

**Saturday, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

**A Dabrowskian Curriculum**

Susan Picard, MA, Gifted Program Coordinator, Grande Prairie Public School District

Practical Application

**Room:** *Canadian Room*

Kazimierz Dabrowski and his Theory of Positive Disintegration and Over-excitabilities was brought to the gifted community by his colleague and contemporary Michael Piechowski more than 30 years ago. Since then many in the gifted community have embraced the theory seeing strong correlations between gifted characteristics and the over-excitabilities. As we seek to better understand the relationship between the over-excitabilities, positive disintegration and personality development the question emerges whether there can be a curriculum that supports this journey or if it is necessarily a personal one, and highly individual. This session will explore that question and suggest a possible curriculum.

**Susan Picard, MA**, Grande Prairie Public School District, Grande Prairie, AB. The presenter completed her masters in Curriculum Teaching and Learning in 2002 in which she explored the tension between the formal curriculum and the pedagogical relationship. She has been a Gifted Program Coordinator for the past seven years, working with gifted students since 1998. In her current role, one that encompasses gifted assessment, consulting, instructional coaching as well as pull-in programming, she has worked hard to find meaningful programming that addresses both the need for academic challenges as well as responding to the social and emotional needs of gifted students. After presenting at the Dabrowski Congress in 2014, she struggled with the idea that there is (can be) no curriculum for positive disintegration. In this presentation she will redefine curriculum, community and developmental potential in an effort to introduce a Dabrowskian curriculum as she shares student responses to what was reputed to be Kazimierz Dabrowski's favorite book: *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery.

**Thursday evening, Friday and Saturday**

**POSTER SESSIONS**

**1) Overexcitabilities, ADHD, and Gender: Profile of a Gifted High School in Gebze, Turkey**

Erin Hough, M. Ed. Curriculum and Instruction, University of Denver

Methods/Theory

**Room:** *Main Foyer*

This study compares Overexcitabilities, ADHD status, and gender in a population of gifted students at a high school in Turkey. It is the first study to compare OE scores of gifted students to their ADHD statuses. A translated version of the Overexcitability Questionnaire II (OEQ-II) was administered to 252 gifted high school students in Gebze, Turkey. Scores were compared with students' ADHD diagnoses and their overexcitability scores, with special attention paid to the relationship between Psychomotor overexcitability and ADHD status. Results showed that the percentage of students at this gifted school diagnosed with ADHD was significantly higher than the worldwide average, with a higher rate of diagnosis in girls than in boys. Girls reported significantly higher Emotional and Sensual OEs, and there was no significant difference between Psychomotor and Intellectual OEs of girls and boys.

## 2) **View Side by Side”: Overexcitability and Openness to Experience as Characteristics of (Creatively) Gifted Students**

Ana Altaras Dimitrijević, Department of Psychology, University of Belgrade

Methods/Theory

**Room:** *Main Foyer*

Discussions on the socio-emotional needs of the gifted commonly touch upon the concept of overexcitability (OE): giftedness, it is proposed, is associated with an expanded and intensified manner of experiencing the world (i.e., OE), occurring in the psychomotor, sensual, imaginal, emotional, and/or intellectual modality. However, empirical evidence on this relationship is inconclusive, and considerations thereof fail to recognize the kinship and possible overlap between the more esoteric concept of OE and one of the Big Five personality traits – Openness to experience. The aim of our study was therefore to test whether creatively gifted individuals are indeed characterized by OE, particularly when Openness is taken into consideration.

Study participants were 311 undergraduate students, who filled out the Overexcitability Questionnaire II (OEQ-II), assessing the above listed five forms of OE, and the Creative Activities and Accomplishments Inventory (CAAI). The latter is a 52-item questionnaire asking respondents to report how often they engage in particular creative activities and what their creative accomplishments are. Based on the CAAI score, participants were assigned to either the “creatively gifted” (N=62, upper 19.9%) or the “non-creative” group (N=249, 80.1%). For 189 participants, who had previously been administered the NEO-PI-R, Openness scores were also available.

Although these results should be interpreted with caution, since the relative importance of OE vs. Openness was investigated with only a portion of the total sample, they do provide preliminary evidence to the expected: that individual differences in OE overlap with those encompassed by the construct of Openness to experience, particularly its intellectual curiosity facet (i.e., Openness to Ideas). Further research should thus consider a unified focus on OE and Openness when dealing with the characteristics and socio-emotional needs of the gifted.

**Saturday, 3:00 pm**

### **WRAP UP & NEXT CONGRESS**

Janneke Frank and Krystyna Laycraft

**Room:** *Sheraton Ballroom*

**Final Thoughts:** The keynote and signature session presenters during the congress will have an opportunity to share “final thoughts” for congress attendees and answer questions from the audience about any aspects of their presentations or questions about Dabrowski’s theory.

We will allow attendees to share their comments about the congress as we look forward to the 13<sup>th</sup> International Dabrowski Congress 2018.

Congress Co-Chairs will invite delegates to volunteer to host the next congress.

# Conference Appreciation

We would like to thank the following for supporting our congress.

The Organizing Committee members:

Laurie Alisat  
Dave Anton  
Mike Craig  
Hal Curties  
John Finlay  
Linda Finlay  
Janneke Frank – Congress Co-Chair  
Joe Frank – Planning Committee, Chair  
Gaye Harden  
David Holland  
Rosanne Holland  
Michele Kane  
Ralamy Kneeshaw  
Krystyna Laycraft – Congress Co-Chair  
Mary-Jo Pow  
Lorraine Ryan  
Lynne Ursenbach

Thank you for your attendance and safe travels home.