

To  
Prof. Nicholas Colangelo,  
Prof. François Gagné,  
Prof. Javier Tourón  
Prof. Sonia Bralic,  
Prof. Maria de los Dolores Valadez,  
Prof. Pedro Covarrubias,  
Prof. Leandro Almeida,  
Prof. Pedro Sánchez Escobedo  
Prof. Susan Lynn G Assouline  
Prof. Maureen Marron,  
Prof. Violeta Arancibia

Dear colleagues,

I am the current President of Conselho Brasileiro para Superdotação (ConBraSD) (Brazilian Council for Giftedness), a NPO (non-profit organization) gathering gifted people and families, researchers in the field of High Abilities/Giftedness, professors, teachers, and public and private institutions serving the gifted within the 27 Brazilian states.

We are beginning the organization of the X Ibero American Congress on Giftedness, Talent and Creativity, the II International Congress on High Ability/Giftedness and the VI National Meeting of ConBraSD, which will be held in Foz de Iguaçu, Paraná, Brazil, on November 11-14, 2014. Among the members of the Scientific Committee, we have included Dr. Guenther, who is one of our Honorary Counselors, inviting her to be part of such Committee. In her acceptance message, Dr. Guenther attached a copy of the e-mails she has exchanged with Dr. Gagné and forwarded to all of you during 2008-2009. As none of the Brazilian authors/researchers on giftedness was among the professionals who acknowledged the e-mails, I felt it was my duty to forward the attached document to them.

Most of these professionals, members of the Executive Board, Technical Committee and Fiscal Committee of this Council suggested I send you this letter, in order to clear up some issues and state our common philosophic grounds.

I would like to inform you that discussions on terminology have been taking place in Brazil for several decades and will possibly go on. In fact, there were

many presentations on that issue during the last three National Meetings of the Brazilian Council for Giftedness (2008, 2010, 2012).

- 1) We agree on the negative impact the Portuguese and Spanish words “superdotado” and “sobredotado”, and the French “surdoué” have, because of the superlative content of the prefix, not so different from the impact the English word “gifted” has, because of its root and meaning. However, removing the prefix will not change the negative impact, it will add other misunderstandings and confusions, such as: a) “dotado”, both in Portuguese and Spanish, is an adjective, not a noun, requiring a complement to be understood, and is not related to gifted in neither the Portuguese nor the Spanish Academy Dictionaries; b) the word has been popularly used for other vulgar ends (images in the Internet would be more explicit).
- 2) In 2002, in Lavras (Minas Gerais, Brazil), during an event organized by Dr. Guenther, a group of researchers and parents of gifted people from different Brazilian states have agreed to found the Brazilian Council for Giftedness, also discussing the terminology to be used. At that time, most Brazilian researchers used the words “superdotado”, “pessoa com altas habilidades”, and “talentoso”, although knowing Dr. Guenther’s preference for the word “bem-dotado”. Only recently, Dr. Guenther began using the word “dotado”. At the foundation of ConBraSD, in 2003, all the professionals present have agreed to use “Altas Habilidades/ Superdotação” (high ability/giftedness), an expression which is currently used in all the educational legal documents issued by the Ministry of Education and by most of the researchers in the field;
- 3) I would also like to inform that I have some bibliographic references of the early works on giftedness published in the country, which were written in the 1930’s. In these works, the words used were “supernormaes” (supernormal) (MEDEIROS, 1930; KASEFF, 1931; PAIS BARRETO, 1931), “mais capazes” (ablest) (MONTENEGRO, 1932), “bem-dotados” (something like well endowed) (PINTO, 1933) and “superdotados” (gifted) (DECROLY, 1932). Thus, the information that the word “gifted” was first translated into Portuguese as “superdotado” in the 1970’s, as stated in Prof. Zenita Guenther’s letter is not correct;

- 4) Brazilian researchers supporting this Letter consider that the expression “Altas Habilidades/Superdotação” (giftedness) is the most suitable in Portuguese, and should not be changed at this moment;
- 5) Brazilian researchers supporting this Manifesto consider that there are much more important issues to be discussed and addressed, and we should devote our efforts to assuring and improving public policies and services for gifted people, which is something they desperately need;
- 6) This letter aims at explaining our position in relation to the terminology, which is not a personal, but a common decision among the researchers, authors and professionals who sign it.

Susana Graciela Pérez Barrera Pérez (Ph.D., Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil)

President

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(Translation of the e-mail sent to Dr. Guenther on June 12, 2013)

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**Subject:** Fw: Documento enviado pela Profa. Zenita Guenther

Dear Zenita,

I have received the e-mails you and Prof. Gagné have exchanged with Prof. Colangelo and other foreign authors and I'm forwarding them to the main Brazilian authors and to ConBraSD Executive Board, Technical and Fiscal Committees as, unfortunately, we are acknowledging know.

As you know, the expression "Altas Habilidades/Superdotação" was widely discussed since the pre-foundation meeting of ConBraSD, in Lavras, in 2002 and it was adopted by decision of the Brazilian Council for Giftedness founders, among whom you were, in 2003.

Thus, this is the expression we will keep in the name of the events and also the one we will use in all our documents and publications, at least until the General Assembly of this Council, which is sovereign, would decide otherwise.

Personally, I deeply disagree from your position, and I have already written on that in a chapter of the book "Altas Habilidades/Superdotação, talento, dotação e educação", ("High ability/giftedness, talent, giftedness and education") edited by Prof. Laura Ceretta Moreira & Tânia Hotz.

I am a professor, a translator, and I speak English since I was 5 years old, French since I was 12, and my mother language is Spanish. Thus, I am quite comfortable in stating that "high ability" could be translated into "altas habilidades", both in Portuguese and Spanish, and that replacing "superdotado" by "dotado" does not change the significant load the word has in Spanish or Portuguese.

I'm not going to initiate a unfruitful and long discussion on who is right or not, I just want to clear up to those not mastering other languages, that translating gifted into "superdotado" is certainly not the most correct, because *gift* means "dom/presente" and then, "gifted", would mean "dotado" (but not "presenteado"), but it was historically translated into "superdotado" and not "dotado".

And, which is the meaning the word "dotado" has in Brazilian Portuguese? And, in Spanish?

If you search in the Internet, which is the widest collection of information and disinformation, you will find the popular meaning. It is certainly not suitable, in my opinion.

How do you translate "saudade"? We could write a scientific treaty about the literal translation of "saudade" and no one would reach a "decision" about the right translation, simply because there is none! It is very difficult to an English speaker to understand the real meaning of a word in Portuguese and, thus, to have an opinion on which is the best translation into Portuguese.

Thus, Dear Zenita, I respect (but do not share) your decision to adopt “dotado”; I do not like the word “superdotado”, but, because of the respect to the ConBraSD decision, we will keep the expression adopted in our foundation, at least for now.

I think that we must now focus our collective efforts in making our children, youth and adults to be recognized, respected and valued.

This is, I believe, the greatest mission of ConBraSD and all of us!

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