

# **Multiliteracy and Online Discourse Community: How SENG Meets the Needs of the Dispersed Gifted Community “Over a Lifespan”**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The social media revolution has transformed the definition of literacy and how people communicate in ways unforeseeable 30 years ago. Early in the days of internet groups, John B. Horrigan wrote in “Online Communities,” “Our findings suggest that the online world is a vibrant social universe where many Internet users enjoy serious and satisfying contact with online communities. These online groups are made up of those who share passions, beliefs, hobbies, or lifestyles. Tens of millions of Americans have joined communities after discovering them online.” Although this article is quite dated when considering the development of internet communities since 2001, it does offer

extensive survey data of how internet use can create both actual community and a sense of belonging.

This newly emerging form of online discourse community is of specific importance to the gifted community at large because of the sense of isolation that can accompany giftedness. In her article, “One True Peer,” researcher on gifted issues Kathleen Casper offers real life examples of the kind of isolation that can accompany giftedness, such as a man who had only two childhood friends and adults who feel they can never be themselves when interacting with others. Lea Stublarec, longtime therapist for the gifted, addresses isolation in her article “‘In Sync’: The Power of Tribe—A Perspective on Giftedness”:

It’s not too surprising that feelings of isolation and the pain of being different can be greatly assuaged by connecting with others who can provide the emotional, intellectual, imaginal, sensual, physical support we need as gifted individuals. Unfortunately, because the number of exceptionally and profoundly gifted is such a small percentage of the population, it can be difficult to find and establish relationships with true peers.

These experts explain how members of the inherently physically dispersed gifted community struggle to find peers and support. An antidote to this isolation can be provided, in part, and sometimes only, by online communities.

In his article “What Is Literacy,” Gee explains that literacy is so much more than the ability to read and write in a primary language acquired in childhood (21-22). He further

explains literacy, in his article “Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics,” as necessary for acceptance into secondary, or public, discourse communities and intrinsically linked to “social practices” (482-486). In 1996, in response to the changing nature of communication in the digital age, The New London Group expanded the definition of literacy to include the concept of multiliteracy in an article entitled, “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures,” writing, “new communications media are reshaping the way we use language. When technologies of meaning are changing so rapidly, there cannot be one set of standards or skills that constitute the ends of literacy.” Stated simply, multiliteracy is the form of literacy required to navigate within modern forms of media communication rather than the traditional format of paper. More specifically for the purposes of this paper, digital multiliteracy is exercising literacy within various digital platforms.

The relationship between digital multiliteracy and reduced isolation has been overlooked in existing research. Studies abound on how digital multiliteracy, specifically exercised as social media use, can increase feelings of social isolation. Efforts should be made to explore the cases where this is not true. In groups of societal outliers, such as the gifted, internet-based groups can connect individuals to a world where they are no longer alone. In an interview with Paula Prober, psychotherapist, author and consultant to the gifted community, recalls that when she entered the discussion of giftedness in the mid-1970s, networking on gifted issues was limited to evening talks at schools and “little articles in the local newspaper...in person stuff.” The advent of internet discourse communities and the acquisition of digital multiliteracy by the general population has

expanded the discussion of giftedness from a few parents and educators gathering in local schools to a vibrant, transforming, and transformative international community.

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted, hereafter referred to by the organization's acronym SENG, provides an interesting subject for inquiry because the rich exchange within the community is permitted by its internet-based discourse and its digitally multiliterate membership. The organization was founded in 1981 by the late Dr. James T Webb, in response to the suicide of a gifted student, well before the social media revolution ([sengifted.org](http://sengifted.org)). As proliferation of online genre and technological literacy have increased SENG offerings over the years, members of the gifted community who previously lived and worked in isolation have been able to participate in a rapidly expanding and diversifying discourse community addressing the specific needs of the gifted community.

"Gifted over a lifespan" is the motto of SENG ([sengifted.org](http://sengifted.org)). How can one organization possibly provide the fulfillment of this lofty and seemingly unattainable goal? I posit that the success and effectiveness of SENG in meeting its goals as a discourse community is intrinsically linked to the digital multiliteracies of its members at a scope unattainable before the digital age. In this paper, I will explore how the needs of a diverse group of individuals with a shared area of focus can be served at disparate locations through exercising digital multiliteracy in an organization like SENG.

The question of how digital multiliteracy strengthens the SENG online discourse community could be of interest to any researcher or individual who is investigating how

the proliferation of online groups has reduced isolation and increased access to information for individuals who lacked peers and cohorts prior to the advent of the internet. Outside the field of literacy, this exploration could hopefully be of value within the gifted community. Dr Gail Post, a clinical psychologist who has worked with the gifted population for decades, expresses in her 2018 article, “Gifted Adults: Embracing Complexity,” the need for gifted individuals to find meaningful connection with peers. Dr Post states, “Ultimately, finding friends and a partner with compatible interests and a similar approach to life will provide greater fulfillment and validation.”

No matter how unusual a person’s needs or interests are or how isolated their location, they no longer need be, or feel, alone. You can find people interested in anything, no matter how obscure or creepy, on the internet. Through internet connectivity and discourse groups, even the most isolated of individuals can find their “tribe” of peers. Research analyzing how digital multiliteracy and internet accessibility have reduced the isolation of society’s outliers would be a welcome antidote to the popular cries that utilizing social media leads to increased social isolation. In more general terms, exploring how the advent of internet support groups and how the use of social media have affected human interaction are interesting questions.

This paper begins with a brief explanation of research conducted, under “Methods.” The body of the paper offers an explanation of the gifted community and the SENG discourse community itself. Secondary research on the need for increased

community amongst the gifted population is included. Primary research on how SENG can be and is used by members will also be presented, analyzed, and explained.

## **METHODS**

Because I am exploring technological literacy and its relationship to shared goals within SENG, examples of the genre available within the discourse community itself are necessary to represent how SENG meets its stated goals as an organization. I will show how the genre and fora available through the SENG website offer cogent and agile solutions for the diverse, dispersed, digitally multiliterate membership consisting of all ages of the lifespan and areas of the gifted community. I will include information on my involvement in the discourse community as it elucidates my thesis.

I have conducted recorded interviews with three individuals about gifted isolation and how SENG addresses giftedness “over a lifespan.” Because these women are involved in the gifted community in various public and pivotal roles, their insights address several of the different areas of SENG discussion. These interviews provide firsthand insights into how the online fora available through SENG have affected these individuals and the gifted communities they serve.

## **DISCUSSION**

In common usage, the term “gifted” is generally linked with “talented” in relation to Talented and Gifted (TAG) programs in public schools. According to the 1972 Marland Report to Congress, gifted students are, “Students, children, or youth who give evidence

of high capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.” The current conversation about giftedness within the SENG discourse community is much broader than the needs of the gifted in public schools, encompassing all stages and areas of life and an increasing understanding of the gifted brain and behaviors through neurobiology and discussion of personal experiences of SENG members.

This broader exploration of giftedness is addressed in the “About Us” page of the SENG website, which states, “SENG is a nonprofit organization that empowers families and communities to guide gifted and talented individuals to reach their goals: intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.” The page defines this more intimately, saying that SENG is “an extended family.” We all need as much supportive community as possible. But why do members of the gifted community need an extended online family to support them through all phases of life?

It turns out that the challenges of being gifted extend long past the challenges of K-12 education, the most widely researched area of the gifted world. Being gifted in and of itself is inherently isolating. In her article “Gifted Adults: Embracing Complexity,” Dr. Gail Post draws the important connection that gifted adults can experience the same challenges as gifted youth, including lack of stimulation, oversensitivity, and social isolation. In discussing social isolation, she offers the following:

It is difficult for gifted children to find like-minded peers. Many question whether to remain true to their inquisitive, intellectual nature, or dumb themselves down to fit in. Gifted adults often struggle with similar concerns. Heightened sensitivities, introversion, off-beat interests, and a desire for in-depth conversation are not the makings of a party animal. Insecurity, low self-esteem, and emotional scars also may be residue from outlier status or possible bullying during childhood. These scars can interfere with finding and maintaining relationships.

Concerning romantic relationship, Kathleen Casper's article, "One True Peer," poignantly states, "The combination of [gifted] characteristics and each gifted person's specific areas of concerns and passions are unique. Therefore, a gifted person may have to search high and low throughout the population of their communities and the world in order to find someone who matches their desires and understands them at the deepest levels." She further delineates the conundrum of gifted isolation: "Researchers theorize that in order to truly connect and form a friendship, often people need to find someone within 10-20 points of their own IQ score. With only about 3-5% of the world's population exhibiting gifted characteristics, and even less having similar interest areas and personality compatibility, this makes it quite difficult for a perfect match to take place." In other words, it takes one to know one!

Which peers does a 3rd grader talk to about the philosophy of physics and theories of spacetime? How can an institution respond if a child is the only exceptionally gifted student a tiny rural school has ever encountered? Often, a gifted child can crop up



in a family of entirely average IQ members. How can that child's parents educate themselves to support their child's development? Educators and communities can understandably think that the "smart" kids need less attention than those who struggle with classwork. Sadly, this often means that little or no gifted programs are offered even in huge urban school districts. How can a therapist assist a young or adult gifted individual or a gifted family to cope with intense emotions, and intellectual and social isolation? How does a gifted elder fulfill the sometimes overwhelming need for intellectual stimulation and the potential emotional and social isolation of giftedness after retirement? The great news is that, thanks to SENG, with some Wi-Fi access and a little multiliteracy, gifted individuals and families and those serving them no longer need to face these challenges alone.

I became aware of this organization during my work as the enrichment coordinator at a small rural school in Oregon. In this position, I was tasked with providing opportunities for academic challenge for students grades K-8 who scored three or more grades above grade level on standardized tests. In addition, I did deep dives on the internet, looking for affordable or free resources to provide for the needs of highly capable students in an impoverished rural district. I began utilizing online trainings from SENG and attended a SENG conference in Olympia WA in 2019. It is partly through my involvement with SENG, utilizing digital multiliteracy, that I decided to return to college with the goal of opening a therapy practice and consultancy for gifted kids and families, especially those in rural areas.

As the mother of an exceptionally gifted son, as a gifted educator, and a gifted adult, I was entirely convinced by the end of the gathering of the singular and profound impact of this discourse, vibrant community. From my own involvement in the community, I know members have a shared consensus that the myriad needs of gifted children and adults are not sufficiently addressed in any existing societal model in the US or internationally. No matter what brings people to gatherings or discussions, the tales of woe and triumph told are shockingly similar in dynamic if not in detail.

SENG is populated by gifted educators, school administrators, therapists who work directly with gifted in schools or private practice, consultants and mentors who serve schools and individuals, parents of gifted individuals, and gifted adults. There are even online groups that serve gifted kids. This rich environment foments diverse intercommunication and collaboration for dynamic and exciting discussions of our shared topic of interest, the diverse and specific needs of the gifted. This ongoing discussion continuously generates solutions from the intensely personal to the global. The issue of being isolated due to location and giftedness are alleviated by the online presence of SENNG. Anyone seeking information, community and support can access them through digital multiliteracy at nominal cost no matter their location.

Through its online presence, SENNG provides a virtual marketplace of ideas for members to access via their multiliteracy. Because of the scope of SENNG subject matter, all areas of experience through the lifetime of a gifted individual, the genres provide everything from emotional and spiritual support to professional certification. The website

offers multiple genres for the multiliterate, including areas such as Continuing Education hours, a mental health provider directory, online support groups for teens and for adults, a vimeo channel that has previous SENGinars available for viewing and purchase, and chat rooms for all ages, kids to seniors, and areas of interest like 2e kids who are both on the gifted and autistic spectrums. The “About Us” page of the website states, “We offer online support groups for gifted, talented and twice-exceptional individuals and their parents/guardians, online SENGinars with leading experts, in-person regional mini-conferences and an annual conference, SENG Model Parent Groups (SMPG) and Facilitator Training, SENG Library, SENGvine e-newsletter, Continuing Education courses for professionals, workshops, and more!” Some of the opportunities listed here are accessible to the general public, some are accessible to members, some require an additional fee in addition to the low annual membership fee. Each of the online genres presented here implies involvement by a group of digitally multiliterate users.

When I attend a SENGinar, I interact with a group of 40-100 technologically multiliterate people who share a specific area of interest to the gifted community and who could be attending from any location on the globe. The online SENGinars, which are presentations in zoom rooms by experts in various fields, cover a wide variety of topics for all areas and ages of gifted life. In a SENGinar, interested parties can educate themselves on a variety of issues around giftedness, as a parent, educator, therapist, gifted adult, or gifted elder. Continuing education hours are also available for most SENGinars. The online format means that any person with technological literacy and internet access can take advantage of these educational opportunities. Accessing these

SENGinars through my digital multiliteracy, I can gain understanding about myself, my kid, my students, and get a leg up on knowledge for my future practice.

This time of increased internet-based community and communication due to COVID-19 lockdown makes the question of internet use and its relationship to a strong yet dispersed community even more important. The current unprecedented global lockdown allows us to consider the question of the importance of online social groups from a new perspective. SENG responded to the COVID-19 lockdown rapidly. By the end of April, SENG had organized a four day online “minicon,” as SENG calls them. Normally, SENG minicons are held over a weekend in metropolitan areas around the country, hopefully allowing people who can’t travel to the annual conference a chance to gather for learning, networking, continuing education hours, tools for the classroom, parenting support and community. During the online minicon, attendees could listen to presentations by experts in a zoom room, usually accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. There were options to ask questions through text messaging, and SENG staff were available to address connectivity and access issues. Attendees have continued access to the presentations at the SENG vimeo channel, where the public may also purchase access to the individual presentations.

Through digital multiliteracy and the online SENG community, individuals could access support, information, and community around giftedness in a time of unprecedented social upheaval. The conference focused on dealing with the quarantine situation for gifted families, although not exclusively. Issues such as managing

homeschooling for the gifted, online schooling and social contact, increased anxiety due to the lockdown, grit, and self-care were all addressed in addition to the typical topics of misdiagnosis and education issues. Presenters addressed how to best handle the homebound situation around the special needs of gifted kids, which is especially important to gifted families with kids who crave intellectual stimulation. Sessions were mostly for parents and educators, with a few for therapists in the field of social and emotional support for the gifted. I attended the online minicon, utilizing multiliteracy to gather information on supporting gifted kids through crisis, which will enhance my current and future work with gifted kids.

It is the ease of accessibility of genres of multiliteracy that allowed SENG to respond so quickly to increased social isolation for the gifted community. COVID-19 is the first time since the advent of the internet that there has been a national disease-based lockdown. SENG's facility with online offerings and the multiliteracies of its discourse community members allowed the organization to provide for the needs of the community at large by attending this conference even while on "lockdown" in their homes. Beyond eliminating the need during a physical conference to pay for travel, accommodations, childcare, and lost work days, this SENG event provides the strongest example of how this online discourse community is uniquely and powerfully situated to serve via digital multiliteracy the needs of a dispersed, multiliterate community with shared goals.

I have explained some of the special needs of the gifted community, particularly around social isolation. I have shown how SENG can address these needs through

multiliterate community members accessing online fora, with particular attention to the April 2020 online minicon created as a response to the COVID-19 lockdown. In addition to the aforementioned research, I conducted three first person interviews which offer real life examples of how SENG uses multiliteracy and online genre to fulfill their stated goal of supporting “gifted over a lifespan.”

Karen Toombs, Director of Silverleaf School, a school for gifted elementary learners in Salem, Oregon, says she finds SENG invaluable because it addresses the needs of “the gifted person” in all areas throughout a lifetime, particularly the emotional aspects. She iterated that other discourse communities focus on one area of the gifted experience. Hoagies’ “Gifted Education” page focuses on education, particularly amongst 2e, those students who inhabit both the gifted and the autism spectrums. The Davidson Institute exists for the profoundly gifted, those students who score at the 99.9% on IQ or standardized placement tests and make up only a small portion of the gifted community. In addition, most of the Davidson Institute’s programs can only be accessed at their physical location in Reno, NV. The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) deals with education up to 12th grade. Senora Toombs accesses SENG online offerings to fulfill personal needs as the parent of a gifted child. She also visits the site often to identify scientifically based best practices for the gifted classrooms at Silverleaf School. Toombs explains that by utilizing resources from SENG, “we don’t have to reinvent everything every time. We can take an existing best practice and apply it to our curriculum.” She says she realized through research at SENG that her gifted father did not suffer after retirement from depression but rather from boredom after losing his only

venue for mental stimulation and gifted peer interaction via the workplace. Using her digital multiliteracy to explore the gifted world through SENG, Sra. Toombs is empowered as a mother, daughter, and a school director, which in turns empowers her community.

Another friend, who has worked as an educator and administrator in gifted education, finds SENG invaluable and singular in supporting gifted adults. This interviewee wishes to be referred to as “Anonymous” so that she might speak freely in the interview. She claims SENG presentations by scientists and other gifted adults affirm the experiences of gifted adults in their “intensities, wonderful enthusiasms, and frustrations.” Especially for 2e families, she says SENG “helps us know our kids are not crazy and helps them work on their executive function.” Utilizing her multiliteracy and SENG online genre, this individual networks through SENG by sharing links for SENGinars and evines, the SENG online newsletter, with the families of students; identifying experts in the field of gifted education and research both inside and outside of the local area; and utilizing SENGinar presentations for material for her own published articles on gifted issues in education. Anonymous uses her multiliteracy in SENG to interweave her work with and writings for students, families, and local communities.

Paula Prober, Eugene, Oregon based psychotherapist and consultant working exclusively in the gifted world, first learned of SENG in the 1980s as a gifted educator. SENG “fulfilled a great need,” Prober states. Echoing Senora Toombs, she clarifies, “Nobody else is doing it.” She has presented at SENG conferences and SENGinars and shares links to the SENG website in her practice, books, and internationally accessed

blog. Her presentations with SENG have mostly addressed the challenges gifted adults face, particularly in the workplace. She speaks of how since the advent of the internet, the conversation about giftedness has grown to include life outside the classroom. SENG is now “building their strand for adults, gifted aging and elders. The dialogue is expanding,” Prober explains. “The internet age has been a great boon for gifted people...,” says Prober, “When I see parents [as clients] today, there is a wealth of information”. She sees isolation as inherent in the gifted experience. “And now with the internet, there are ways to find intellectual peers. You have to be brave and willing...to send an email and ask them...to mentor, [to] suggest graduate programs with a brilliant person in your field.” As a therapist and blogger who contributes to the larger discussion at SENG, Prober is uniquely situated to speak to the importance of the SENG online discourse community.

These women skillfully integrate SENG offerings into their work, using their digital multiliteracy and SENG to strengthen and spread information and community in varied portions of the gifted population from the classroom to the aged. Their work both draws from and also adds to the interwoven discourse of SENG. Through accessing information in SENG fora, Senora Toombs is strengthened as a gifted parent, family member and educator. Anonymous uses multiliteracy to access SENG offerings such as the newsletter. She shares links to SENG genres to digitally multiliterate members of the gifted community, growing the network of support in the local gifted education community as well as strengthening gifted families. Paula Prober accesses and contributes to SENG offerings, providing networking opportunities through her own international online



discourse community on gifted issues, called “The Rainforest Mind.” When she suggests in the interview that gifted individuals reach out to potential peers and mentors via the internet, Prober models utilizing digital multiliteracy to reduce social isolation.

A brief analysis of these interviews hints as to the intricacy of the discourse that the online genre of SENG allows. Without multiliteracy, Sra. Toombs may have eventually arrived after extensive research at the decision to open a school for gifted elementary students in Salem. But access to networks of information through online resources like SENG allowed her to see the systemic lack of programs for the gifted on the statewide and nationwide levels, strengthening her resolve that new and big solutions for gifted students are vital and necessary (Toombs). Anonymous works in the background of her local community, her multiliteracy allowing her to access and share online genres through SENG. Even so briefly outlined, Paula Prober’s multi decade involvement in the gifted community shows how multiliteracy and specifically the SENG online discourse community have radically transformed and expanded interactions within the gifted community. She wrote articles on gifted issues for school newspapers at the beginning of her career. Now she is read worldwide through online genres in her own and SENG’s discourse communities.

The ways these women use digital multiliteracy are concrete examples of how the internet can truly be a worldwide web of communication and community. Instead of working in isolation, with occasional local meetings with cohorts, through digital literacy and skillful use of the SENG genre, these women inhabit, enjoy, and enhance a global

conversation on how to serve the needs of the gifted community. The interviewees, all drawn from the mid-Willamette valley of Oregon, access SENG fora to support the gifted community in their homes, their workplaces, their published works, their local communities, and the national and international gifted community. Collectively, they use SENG to work directly with gifted individuals in every portion of the lifespan, which is the stated goal of SENG (sengifted.org). They are all in stated agreement that SENG fulfills a vital niche in the gifted world in ways that no other organization does.

## **CONCLUSION**

Participation in SENG is facilitated through digital multiliteracy as defined by the New London Group and fulfills Gee's concepts of literacy as inherently linked to "social practices" in secondary discourse communities (482-486). Utilizing multiliteracies to access SENG online, otherwise dispersed and sometimes isolated individuals can open a door to support from a nationwide, and occasionally international, community of people experiencing, and overcoming, similar challenges of gifted life. I have shown the magnitude of the isolation that the gifted can experience, with group specific issues such as this following them lifelong. As demonstrated here through the three interviews, there is no other organization doing what SENG does to provide support to the gifted in all areas of life throughout the lifespan, which is the stated goal of the organization (sengifted.org). It should now be clear that digital multiliteracy can allow isolated individuals in a social subgroup a rich and supportive community experience through a carefully crafted online support discourse community like SENG.

Accessibility of online fora at SENG through multiliteracy erases much of the isolation of being part of a small dispersed social subgroup. The marriage of online presence and a digitally multiliterate community has taken what were once isolated individuals working alone or in small groups and seemingly effortlessly created a huge nationwide and even international “family”. None of the challenges of the gifted “tribe” are erased by SENG except for isolation. However, because of the existence of SENG, the gifted tribe now has a gifted world to coinhabit, accessing the rich and vast resources of thousands of peers of all types via online resources. However, this miracle is not effortless at all. Rather it is the skillful utilization of online fora that allows such varied and easily accessed support to occur. Even in a time of unprecedented global change such as the COVID-19 lockdown, SENG could respond quickly on a nationwide level to the challenges of unexpectedly educating gifted children at home. No matter what age, area of interest or work, or location, a network of information on the gifted community is available now with a device, internet access, multiliteracy and a few taps of the fingertips.

What can analyzing this online discourse community tell us about digital multiliteracy and social isolation? Skillful utilization of online fora by a discourse community allows, even in a time of unprecedented global change and severe isolation, for a dispersed membership to access support, information, and community. Community can grow through multiliteracy to encompass people far outside one’s local area. This is vastly important for groups of outliers, such as the gifted community. Further, this paper has shown how those utilizing resources through a group organized like SENG can strengthen an isolated outlier community even outside the direct membership through

education, networking, blogging, published works, and local institutions. Individuals and groups within and without such an online discourse community are empowered to create change from the personal to the global level. Through digital multiliteracy and online discourse communities, individuals and groups can now walk and work shoulder to shoulder no matter how distantly the shoulders may reside.

More research is needed in all areas of the complex question of this paper. The concept that internet access can alleviate isolation seems intuitive, yet current research focuses on how social media use creates rather than solves problems for individuals. Having an online social life on digital devices is an entirely new phenomenon that deserves closer study. Research has missed the opportunity to track this sociological transformation from its inception. However valuable research could delve into how online discourse communities serve otherwise isolated social outliers, no matter their social subgroup. How do well organized and thought out organizations like SENG affect isolated members of these outlier groups? How do such organizations use online genre to meet their shared goals as a group? How diverse and dispersed are the members of these communities created around shared goals? Surveys tracing the web of networks in such organizations could reveal fascinating patterns of growth and communication and support.

Finally, the research into gifted through the lifespan is just beginning. Longitudinal studies could track how the changing world of gifted education is enhanced by multiliteracy and online community. Gifted teens could be included in online study groups

with assessment of how accessing intellectual and academic peers online enhances their educational and social experiences. Studies of gifted young adults could determine if, how and where they find a mate who can understand them. Is it through the internet? If so, where, and how? The world of gifted adulthood and elders is an almost unmined area of study. Research and analysis could be conducted to see how gifted adults and elders utilize online community to aid in their work and social lives, and how and where they find the intellectual stimulation so necessary for the gifted.

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### **Author Bio**

Sara Cash was only 48 years old when she figured out what she wanted to do with her life, which led to her graduating from Western Oregon in 2021 with a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. Turns out her years as an English major at the University of Kansas in the late 1980s were not entirely a waste--she won the first year writing contest at Western with only a 30 year writing advantage over her cohort. She will enter the Master's in Social Work program at George Fox University Fall of 2021, with the intention of eventually opening a private practice specializing in rural gifted kids and families. In her spare time, she knits comfort booties for Patagonian penguins residing in the Atacamo Desert.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Interview Questions**

In the course of the interview, additional questions arose and were answered along with back and forth discussion. The interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes to an hour.

1. How long have you been involved in the SENG discourse community?
2. Are you a member?
3. How did you learn about SENG?
4. What online resources do you use via SENG? Why?
5. How has participation in SENG affected your work in the gifted community?
6. In your experience and opinion, how has the presence and growth of SENG affected the larger gifted community?
7. How does the different online genre at SENG help meet the stated goals of the organization?
8. Anything else on this topic?