

Systems Newsletter

Center for Gifted Education

The College of William and Mary

Fall 2005

Volume 14 Number 1

Project Athena: Still Going Strong!



Narrative Overview. The 2004-2005 academic year marked the second year of implementation for Project Athena in randomized 3rd-5th grade classrooms across seven school

divisions: Fairfax County, VA., Gloucester County, VA., Greene County, VA., Greenville, S.C., Montgomery County, MD., Newport News, VA., and Westmoreland County, VA. Project Athena is a Javits funded demonstration grant targeting low-income high ability students and in Year II included a total of 1435 students. It demonstrates how the implementation of research-based language arts curriculum can raise the threshold of critical thinking and overall academic performance in these students. Last fall, each participating school division implemented another round of pre-assessment measures to determine if students were making gains in measures of critical thinking, reading comprehension, literary analysis and writing from Year 1. Following several pre-assessment measures, the districts in the experimental classrooms implemented the College of William and Mary language arts units and the comparison classrooms implemented the designated school division's language arts curriculum. During the implementation cycle, which lasted from October, 2004 until February, 2005, Project Athena staff and graduate students, along with several trained school

district personnel, conducted classroom observations twice-once earlier in the implementation cycle and once toward the end of the units. At the conclusion of the curriculum unit implementation, post-assessments were administered. One experimental teacher commented, "I discovered that the students' benefited from the types of questioning, lessons, and literature. I found that even after William & Mary implementation was over, the students had become familiar with the expectations and they began to give me some really detailed, well thought out responses."

In March, 2005, teachers, administrators, and project staff came to the campus of the College of William & Mary to celebrate students' successes and positive data results and plan for the next year. Between March and the end of the school year, Athena staff and graduate students analyzed pre and post assessment data from Year II implementation, planned for the Summer Institute professional development sessions, and continued to work closely with each school division.

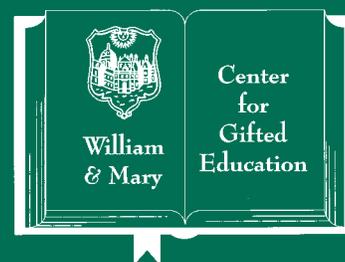
Research Highlights. During Year Two implementation of Project Athena, experimental students did significantly better than control students on both the TCT and the ITBS reading, suggesting a significant treatment effect of the curricular intervention.

Across two years, both experimental and control

Continued on page 4, Project Athena

In This Issue

From the Editors.....	2
In Memoriam Julian C. Stanley.....	2
Executive Director Remarks.....	3
Project Clarion: Promoting Scientific Conceptual Understanding in Promising Young Children.....	5
Developing a Comprehensive Continuum of Services: Options and Resources.....	6
Beyond Proficiency: A Massachusetts Leadership Policy Summit on Gifted and Academically Advanced Students.....	7
Research Update On Project STAR Second Follow-up Study.....	7
Research Update On Project Synergy.....	10





From the Editors



We would like to welcome you to the fall issue of *Systems*. In this issue, we provide updates on some of the Center for Gifted Education's many ongoing projects.

This issue's first article discusses research results from Project Athena's second year of implementation. Dr. Elissa Brown, Director of the Center for Gifted Education, explores these results and discusses the teacher training provided by the Project Athena team this summer. Elsewhere in the issue, Dr. Brown also shares her experiences at the Massachusetts Leadership Policy Summit on Gifted and Academically Advanced Students, held in April of this year, and discusses an evaluation study conducted by the Center for Gifted Education for the Ohio State Department of Education investigating Ohio Schools' continuum of services to gifted students.

In the second article, Dr. Valerie Hastings-Gregory, manager of Project Clarion, details progress on the units being developed for the project. Project Clarion will be implemented in three school districts in Virginia and Maryland beginning in January, 2006. Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Executive Director of the Center, and Dr. Annie Feng, the Center's research and evaluation Director, share details of Project Synergy and Project STAR.

We hope that you continue to be enriched and enlightened by *Systems*. We strive to continue the high level of content provided by this publication.

Photo Courtesy of Johns Hopkins University



In Memoriam Julian C. Stanley

On August 12, with the death of Dr. Julian Stanley, the field of gifted education lost one of its luminaries.

Dr. Stanley was born in East Point, GA in 1918 and graduated from West Georgia Junior College and Georgia Southern University. He taught

science and math in Atlanta high schools, then served in the Army Air Corps Chemical Warfare Service during World War II. After the war, he returned to school on the GI Bill, earning his Doctorate in Education from Harvard University. He later received honorary doctorates from the University of North Texas and the State University of West Georgia.

Dr. Stanley began his career in academia as a quantitative psychologist and was widely hailed for his work in educational research design. His book *Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs for Research*, coauthored with Donald Campbell, remains a classic in the field. In 1969 the focus of his work took a turn. He met Joseph Bates, a highly gifted 13-year-old who had exhausted the opportunities offered by his school system, and became interested in high ability

students. Dr. Stanley began using standardized tests, including the College Board SAT, to measure advanced mathematical and verbal reasoning abilities in exceptionally gifted students. In 1979, the Center for Talented Youth was established at Johns Hopkins University to further identify and serve gifted students. Other programs based on Dr. Stanley's model were established at Duke University, Northwestern University, the University of Denver, and other sites, including Spain and Ireland. By 2005, these programs offered testing and rigorous course work to more than 200,000 highly talented students.

Dr. Stanley also served as an important mentor to Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, executive director of the College of William and Mary's Center for Gifted Education, for nearly 30 years. She remembers, "He was a man on a mission to do as much as possible to make the world a better place for students with extraordinary capabilities. He intuited that the plight of the gifted in American education would never be eased unless systematic approaches to student identification and service, regardless of geography or social economic level, were found. He had a mind and a heart that refused to stop working until gifted students received an appropriate education for their nature and level of abilities. "He will be missed by the world of gifted education for his clarity of vision, his groundbreaking efforts in research and development on talent, and his emphasis on personalizing the talent development process for so many. We are all better people to have known him, and our society is richer for his life of service to others." 





From the Executive Director

Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska

The following are excerpts from my remarks at the special luncheon held for faculty and graduating gifted education students, held on May 13, 2005 on the campus of the College of William and Mary.

This spring, the Center published a special issue of *Current Issues in Gifted Education*. Written by our master's and doctoral students, the journal discussed eminent creators in many fields. While eminence is inspiring, it represents the full scope of a person's career contribution. The goal of our program here at the College of William and Mary is not to create eminence but rather to provide the structure for creating a productive professional life in a role that involves our students as teachers, scholars, and advocates for gifted children in an array of contexts from local school districts to universities.

What are the variables that will help you become creatively productive over the course of your career? The following ideas may prove helpful in the quest.

Like the character Pi Patel in Yann Martel's novel *Life of Pi*, who studied and actively practiced three distinct religions - Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity - strive to be open to different and contrasting cultural stimuli and embrace diversity in all its forms. Tolerate divergent views. Learn from people who see the world differently. What are their assumptions about the world that account for their perspective? How is their view different from yours? How can you accommodate their perspective into a broader understanding of an issue or problem?

Think independently; do not limit yourself to viewing education through a single lens. Instead, be able to bring understanding from other disciplines to bear on educational problems. For instance, the economic theory of cost transactions can help us to understand tradeoffs in school reform. We can use social capital theories to construct interventions for children of poverty and

psychological motivation theories to enhance the potential for advanced learning. The aesthetic qualities of the arts teach us to create balance and bring perspective and nuance to the acts of teaching and learning. Key ideas that work in other professional fields can also be brought to bear on education. We can learn from studies of leadership and management in the business world and the case model of learning from law.

In addition to looking at fields other than education, remember to bring together strands of thought from the branches within education to inform your work in gifted education. Adopt learning strategies from special education. Draw on ideas about content-relevant pedagogy and assessment from the content area standards movement in general education. Focus on wellness and exemplars of excellence in human functioning based on the positive psychology movement in that discipline. Remember to stress becoming, not just being. Keep in mind Maslow's self-improvement mantra, "Strive to be better tomorrow than today."

Make sure to stay in touch with others in the field. Send them your work in progress. Find a group of people who share your passion and commitment to this field and stay in touch with them. Collaborate with them on projects and keep the life of the mind alive through discussion. Do not look exclusively to your peers, however; keep your mentors as well. The significant interactions with them that brought you to this point in your life can and should continue as you progress on the talent development journey.

Find ways to cope with social distractions and constraints that take away your concentration and focus on what you truly want to do. Csiksenmihalyi's study of constructive use of leisure time found that socializing, hanging out at malls, and TV watching were deadly for adolescents - this is true of adults as well. Task commitment and perseverance are essential aspects of staying creatively productive throughout life, not just short term strategies useful for

finishing a master's thesis or dissertation.

Maintain openness and a childlike vision of possibility in yourself, others, and our world. Consider James Banks' view of social reconstructionism as one of making a better world through social action and change in education, not just a passive acceptance of what is. Look for role models who keep playfulness alive in their work, like David MacCauley, who used journals scribbled on a daily commute as the basis for published work, or Jonas Salk, whose graphic doodles led to key scientific breakthroughs.

Continue to deepen knowledge of your field and how to study it. Attend conferences, read, and write papers for publication. Stay passionate about good ideas, testing them out in real educational contexts. Continue to develop and refine your ideas. Remember the 10-year rule and give your ideas time to come to fruition.

Use critical and creative thinking skills deliberately and regularly. Make inferences and apply evaluative judgments with care. Discern assumptions based on multiple perspectives. Draw consequences and implications from what has occurred, both positive and negative, short term and long term. Think divergently. Create analogies to help understand difficult concepts, just as Robert Sternberg used investment strategy as an analogy in his model for thinking about talent. Find the apt metaphor. Consider the effectiveness of metaphors such as "the great chain of being" to illustrate connectivity in the world, "abandonment" as the metaphor behind No Child Left Behind, or "neglect" in the American Negro College Fund slogan "A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste". Practice techniques such as ideational fluency, combinational thinking, and selective comparison with existing organized ideas.

I conclude this talk with the poem "I Remember Galileo" by Gerald Stern.

Continued on page 4, Executive Director

Executive Director

(cont'd from page 3)

I remember Galileo describing the mind
as a piece of paper blown around by the wind,
and I loved the sight of it sticking to a tree,
or jumping into the backseat of a car,
and for years I watched paper leap through my cities;
but yesterday I saw the mind was a squirrel caught crossing
Route 80 between the wheels of a giant truck,
dancing back and forth like a thin leaf,
or a frightened string, for only two seconds living
on the white concrete before he got away,
his life shortened by all that terror, his head
jerking, his yellow teeth ground down to dust.

It was the speed of the squirrel and his lowness to the ground,
his great purpose and the alertness of his dancing,
that showed me the difference between him and paper.

Paper will do in theory, when there is time
to sit back in a metal chair and study shadows;
but for this life I need a squirrel,
his clawed feet spread, his whole soul quivering,

the loud noise shaking him from head to tail.
O philosophical mind, O mind of paper, I need a squirrel
finishing his wild dash across the highway,
rushing up his green ungoverned hillside.

The squirrel image of Stern's poem is apropos of today's life in the fast lane. No one has the luxury of time to contemplate in ivory towers, whether they are contextual or self-imposed. We need to enter the fray and use our intelligence wisely and our time well.

The program at the College of William and Mary has given you a toolkit to continue a lifelong journey of talent development in a chosen field. You have the intellectual scaffolding and skills you need to succeed as well as connections to people and institutions to help you on your journey. Make meaning out of what you have been given here. Go forth and create a creative and productive professional life in gifted education!



Project Athena

(cont'd from page 1)

students registered significant learning gains on the TCT and the ITBS reading. Experimental students obtained higher mean scores than control students on both TCT and ITBS reading at each testing point during two years' implementation.

Two years' data showed that there was a gender effect on TCT, favoring female students' performance across the board.

There appeared to be no gender effect on the ITBS reading assessment between male and female students over a two year implementation.



Fort Belvoir staff at the Summer Institute Training for Project Athena. (Background - l to r) Administrators at Fort Belvoir: Nancy Bradley and Jane Wilson; (standing) Dr. Annie Feng, Director of Research for the Center for Gifted Education; (foreground) Teacher: Carolyn Tompkins.

pattern was true for both the experimental and control groups.

Experimental teachers scored statistically significant and educationally larger on the COS-R scale than control teachers.

Within experimental teachers, returning Athena teachers demonstrated continued increasing instructional improvement from the first to the second observation in Year Two implementation. 



Lee Hall Experimental Teachers receiving instructional training from Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Principal Investigator for Project Athena (l to r): Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Charmaine Hubbard, Dani Dulli, and Nooshin Haghprast.



The two year longitudinal data also indicated that there was an ethnicity effect on both the TCT and the ITBS reading assessment, with White Americans registering highest group performance, followed by African American and Hispanic student populations. This

Project Clarion: Promoting Scientific Conceptual Understanding in Promising Young Children

Project Clarion, a five-year scale up Javits project, was initiated by the Center for Gifted Education during the 2004-2005 academic year. Project Clarion's objectives are as follows: 1) to implement instrumentation sensitive to low socio-economic learners for purposes of enhanced identification and assessment of learning, 2) implement, refine, and extend research-based concept curriculum units of study in grades Pre-K – 3 in three school districts, develop and implement professional training models for teachers, administrators, and broader school communities, and 3) conduct research on short term and longitudinal student learning gains, as well as investigate the mechanisms that promote institutionalization of innovation through curriculum scaling up.

Project Clarion's first year of implementation was a busy one! Accomplishments reflected three major project thrusts: communicating with districts about Project Clarion, determining experimental and comparison classrooms in collaborating districts, and developing earth, life, and physical science curriculum units for pre-kindergarten through third grade students.

Principal investigators Dr. Bruce Bracken and Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska and project manager Dr. Valerie Gregory conducted ambassador meetings to each participating school district: Fairfax County, Virginia; Gloucester County,

Virginia and Montgomery County, Maryland. Six schools with a minimum of 56 experimental classrooms and 56 control classrooms will participate, with an estimated total of 1,010 students in experimental classrooms and 935 students in control classrooms.

Another primary focus of 2004-2005 was the development of science units for pre-kindergarten through third grade students. Earth, life, and physical science units were developed for each grade level—a total of 15 units. Curriculum units are aligned to state and national standards and are based on a curriculum framework that targets:

1. Basic concepts related to understanding the world of science and mathematics,
2. Overarching concepts that unify understanding basic concepts in science and mathematics (i.e., systems, change, patterns, cause and effect),
3. Knowledge of selected content topics in science and mathematics.



Project Clarion Staff (standing from l to r): Dr. Valerie Gregory, Project Manager and Elizabeth Crawford, Research assistant; (sitting from l to r): Research assistants, Megan Balduff, Peggy Jaquot, Andrew Wnek, and Denise Drain.

4. Interrelated science process skills,
5. Critical thinking skills,
6. Creative thinking, and
7. Curiosity and interest in the world of science.

Also, the units emphasize metacognition, student choice, observation of individual learners and the learning process, exploration and inquiry-based play, interdisciplinary concepts and processes, a rich, materials-based environment, and parent involvement extensions. The following chart outlines the scope and sequence for curriculum unit topics by grade level.

Grade Level (Concept)	Earth Science Units	Life Science Units	Physical Science Units
Pre-K (Patterns)	<i>Patterns in Our World</i>	<i>Looking for Patterns in Nature</i>	<i>Patterns in Light and Shadows</i>
K (Change)	<i>Feet on the Ground, Head in the Clouds: Changes in Earth and Sky</i>	<i>Going Full Circle: Life Cycles</i>	<i>Tinkering with Toys: Exploring Physical Science</i>
Grade 1 (Cause & Effect)	<i>What a Disaster! Natural and Man-Made Environmental Changes</i>	<i>Where the Wild Things Are: A Study of Animals</i>	<i>Commotion in Motion: Forces and Magnetism</i>
Grade 2 (Varies)	<i>Scientific Investigators Inc: The Weather Mystery (Meteorology)</i> (Concept: Systems)	<i>Scientific Investigators Inc: The Mystery Cure (Botany)</i> (Concept: Systems)	<i>Scientific Investigators Inc: What's The Matter? (Physics)</i> (Concept: Change)
Grade 3 (varies)	<i>Scientific Investigators Inc: Save It! Everything Comes from Something (Conservation)</i> (Concept: Cause & Effect)	<i>Scientific Investigators Inc: Return of the Wolves (Habitats and Adaptation)</i> (Concept: Systems)	<i>Scientific Investigators Inc: Investigating Simple Machines</i> (Concept: Systems)

Developing a Comprehensive Continuum of Services: Options and Resources

Introduction and Overview

From January 24, 2005 to June 30, 2005, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) contracted with the Center for Gifted Education at The College of William & Mary to conduct a comprehensive research and evaluation study, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education and five Ohio partner school districts, on developing a comprehensive continuum of services for gifted students. The project was conducted under the co-directorship of Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Jody and Layton Smith Professor of Education and Executive Director of the Center for Gifted Education, and Dr. Elissa Brown, Director of the Center for Gifted Education. In addition to Joyce and Elissa, the research team consisted of Dr. Annie Feng, Tamra Stambaugh, and Bess Worley II.

Study Purpose and Evaluation Questions

The research and evaluation study responded to several project objectives: a) to conduct a review and analysis of national research and school district policies and practices related to providing a comprehensive continuum of services for gifted students, b) to develop a “toolkit” for educators that includes a summary of the analysis and research as well as model policies and practical recommendations for school districts, c) to evaluate the availability and comprehensiveness of gifted services available in Ohio schools, d) to document Ohio best practices and recommendations for Ohio school districts regarding service settings, and e) to provide recommendations for the Ohio Department of Education regarding policy development and resources needed to implement a comprehensive K-12 services in Ohio schools.

To investigate the above objectives and provide a foundation for the toolkit, the following research questions guided the design and implementation of this study.

1. To what extent are appropriate instruction and services available to K-12 gifted students in Ohio?
2. To what extent do instruction and service settings employed by Ohio schools match research-based best practices?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of popular service settings employed by Ohio schools?
4. What barriers prevent the provision of a comprehensive continuum of services for gifted students?
5. What policies, activities, and resources are needed for ODE and school districts to improve the availability of comprehensive continua of services for gifted students?
6. How can school districts use available resources most effectively to serve gifted students?

Data Sources

To investigate the above research questions, quantitative and qualitative data were collected from multiple sources including questionnaire statewide coordinator survey, document reviews, focus groups, interviews, and ODE self-report EMIS data. Case studies were developed with identified partnering districts. The five school districts selected for case study analysis were Antwerp Local, Cambridge City, Maumee City, Salem City, and Pickerington Local.



Products Developed

The following products were developed as a result of the study:

- **Research Review and Summary of Continuum of Services Literature**
This product is a thorough review of the research and literature in the areas of continuum of services, curriculum and instruction, organizational arrangements, and student performance and program evaluation. A continuum of services implies that there is a range in the levels and types of need among gifted students at each grade level and that gifted students may need a range of services at each grade level of their school career, not just during certain grades. Based on empirical data and literature-based references, the need for a continuum of services for gifted students is well-documented in the literature, although few states or local school districts employ a full range of service options K-12.
- **Five District Case Studies**
This product represents in-depth qualitative research case studies of five selected school systems in Ohio conducted to gain perceptions from various stakeholder groups of their understanding of the provision of a continuum of services for gifted learners within their school district context. The districts were selected by the Ohio Department of Education and are from different geographic regions from the state of Ohio. Each case study consists of the summaries of a series of interviews with key personnel, such as the Superintendent; focus group sessions with different stakeholder groups, such as parents or teachers; a document analysis of relevant documents submitted by the district, and an overview of the service model employed in the district. A member of the research team conducted an on-site visit to each selected school district to gather and analyze the qualitative data.
- **Ohio Statewide Survey Results**
Local school districts in the state of Ohio are required to complete an annual self-report on identification and services for gifted students. This product contains the quantitative survey results from a total of 600 Ohio local districts providing information on identification and services during 2003-2004.
- **Toolkit and Resources for Developing a Comprehensive Continuum of Services**
The district toolkit provides a framework for school district personnel to see an overview of placement and service models for gifted, the literature and/or research support for each service, practice-based resources and materials, the level of cost efficiency and staff expertise needed to carry out the relevant service. At the end of the toolkit are sample continuum of services templates that districts can use when describing and documenting their array of services.



Beyond Proficiency: A Massachusetts Leadership Policy Summit on Gifted and Academically Advanced Students

Massachusetts is a state that, until recently, had no funding for gifted learners, no state mandates for identification or service, and no policies to safeguard and promote gifted education. That all changed on April 28-29, 2005. An unprecedented event occurred in gifted education! Over 300 educational leaders, most of whom were school superintendents from 108 school districts, collaboratives, and charter schools in Massachusetts, gathered to articulate the issues, identify problems, and suggest action plans that will ultimately create policy and inform decision-makers for the gifted and academically advanced students in Massachusetts. This was the first conference of its kind targeted for school superintendents of Massachusetts. When queried about the need for this type of summit, Dr. Thomas Payzant, Superintendent of Boston public schools, replied, "Too often our students with the highest potential, who are capable of more rigorous and challenging learning, do not receive the necessary encouragement and support necessary to motivate them to excel. Massachusetts must not leave behind these high potential youth who come from all racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. This type of Summit is imperative for Massachusetts." The two day event brought Massachusetts's school district superintendents, representatives from higher education, key personnel from the state department of education, and members of the Massachusetts state legislature together with national experts in gifted education. The goals of the Summit included:

- Gather and disseminate data on the current state of gifted and academically advanced education
- Provide research-based options for policy
- Create action plans that delineate step-by-step processes to build better educational options
- Provide follow-up support on action plan details so that plans can be successfully implemented.

The Center for Gifted Education partnered with the Massachusetts Department of Education in the development of the Summit by providing strategic planning and technical assistance in laying out the framework for the two day Summit. During the Summit, Dr. Elissa Brown, Director of the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William & Mary, served as Summit moderator. On the first day of the Summit, participants heard from

international experts in gifted education: Dr. Sally Reis from the University of Connecticut, Dr. Joyce Van Tassel-Baska from The College of William & Mary, and Dr. Nick Colangelo from the University of Iowa. Participants were pre-assigned to one of five working groups and on day two, after a morning keynote address by Dr. Donna Ford of Vanderbilt University, participants spent the day in their working sessions reflecting on salient points from the previous day's presentations, identifying relevant issues, and developing action plans for implementation. Small group facilitators for these groups were Karen Rogers, Rick Olenchak, Ann Robinson, Catherine Little, and Joyce VanTassel-Baska. As a result of the April Summit, the following activities have occurred in Massachusetts:

- A Summit DVD featuring all keynote speakers was developed and distributed to all Summit participants. In addition, 50 additional districts have requested copies. Many school districts are using the DVD to hold in-house staff development for educators.
- A draft policy paper and summary of Summit Action plans has been developed, and will be submitted to the Governor of Massachusetts

and members of the state house by October, 2005.

- The Chair of the Massachusetts sub-committee on education convened a special hearing to learn about the outcomes of the Summit.
- The state allocated \$500,000 for gifted education in Massachusetts.
- Coursework in gifted education is being offered for the first time through UMASS-Amherst and UMASS-Boston.
- Virtual High School has opened 50 on-line high school courses to eligible gifted and talented middle school students.
- The Massachusetts Department of Education received a \$326,682 Javits grant entitled "The Massachusetts Partnership," which will build on existing state initiatives.

Based on the success of this model, the National Association for Gifted Children, in collaboration with the College Board, will host a forum at the NAGC conference in November especially for Kentucky superintendents as one of the pre-convention events. 

Research Update on Project STAR Second Follow-up Study

The Project STAR Follow-up II study has entered its second year. The purpose of this second follow-up study is twofold: to conduct a continuing trend analysis of profiles and performance of students who qualified for the gifted program based on their scores on a performance task assessment and to examine in-depth the learning and developmental characteristics of the special population of interest (i.e., low income and minority students).

The research team has conducted on-site and off-site phone interviews with fifth and seventh grade students, parents, and teachers and developed 37 vignettes for cases with data from these three perspectives. Summary findings were written for each of five research prototypes: low income African American students, low income other minority students, low income White students, high nonverbal and low verbal students, and twice-exceptional students. Cross-prototype themes were also derived. The Principal Investigator, Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, reviewed and edited all vignettes with feedback from each researcher regarding suggested changes. The vignettes will provide a data based perspective on special population prototypes for use in professional development contexts.

For the quantitative component of the study, we were able to examine the trend of identification profiles of Project STAR-identified students in terms of gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status relative to that of

Continued on page 10, Project STAR



Center

Announcements and Updates

The Center is pleased to announce the publication of the third edition of *Comprehensive Curriculum for Gifted Learners* by Joyce VanTassel-Baska and Tamra Stambaugh. The book, a guide for developing and selecting appropriate curriculum for gifted learners with an emphasis on complying with national and state standards, has been significantly revised for this new edition. It features new chapters on technology connections and assessment and evaluation of gifted learners as well as new or significantly updated graphic organizers, lesson plans, and model curricula. Co-author Tamra Stambaugh shared her reaction to the book's publication: "The second edition of the book was one of the first books I read when I entered the field of gifted education. I trust the third edition will impact educators and students the way the previous edition influence my professional practice and consequently the teachers and students with whom I work."



Center Executive Director News

After two years as President-Elect of the National Association for Gifted Children, Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska ascended to the organization's presidency this month. She has identified four major initiatives to be addressed during her presidency: new NCATE teacher education standards and the creation of a university network of scholars in the field, a renewed emphasis on state policy development and strengthening state and local program efforts, a focus on promising students of poverty, and an increased emphasis on multiple perspectives on issues in the field.

Dr. VanTassel-Baska brings 40 years of educational experience to bear on her new role as NAGC president. She has worked as both a teacher and administrator in local schools, a state director of gifted programs, regional director of professional development for 100 school districts,

and founding director of two university-based centers for gifted education. She says, "I am excited and thrilled to lead such an important organization during this dynamic period of change in both the field and the organization." We wish her well as she begins her term of office.

This August, Dr. VanTassel-Baska received the President's award from the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children for exceptional work for and service to that organization over the past seven years as editor of *Gifted and Talented International*.

In August, Dr. VanTassel-Baska also delivered the Esther Katz Rosen lecture at the American Psychological Association conference in Washington, D.C. She discussed nurturing gifted students through the use of high quality curriculum and research-based instructional strategies, drawing on a decade of research from the Center for Gifted Education here at the College of William and Mary.

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Awards

The Center is pleased to announce two awards from the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) this year. Dr. Chwee Quek, a recent doctoral graduate of the College of William and Mary Education Planning Policy and Leadership program, will be receiving the Doctoral Student award at the NAGC conference in November. We are proud of her accomplishment and will miss her presence at the Center.

In addition, *A House Divided? The Civil War: Its Causes and Effects*, a new social studies curriculum unit produced by the Center for use with fifth and sixth grade students, will be honored with a curriculum award.

Additional Staff and Graduate Assistants

A new academic year always brings changes. Here at the Center, we are celebrating the addition of two staff members and one faculty member to our community.



Dr. Janice Robbins comes to the Center with an extensive background in gifted education. She has spent much of her career in Fairfax County public schools, working as a classroom teacher, gifted resource teacher, county gifted coordinator, and principal of two schools, Haycock Elementary and Longfellow Middle, with centers for highly gifted children. She also worked as curriculum chief for the Department of Defense schools and has served as advisory board member for both the Center and the Virginia State Association for the Gifted. Dr Robbins earned her Ph.D. in Research and Evaluation from Virginia Tech and comes to the Center as the Director of Special Projects.



Dr. Thea Williams-Hayes joins us as the new Director of Pre-Collegiate Learner Programs. She earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Southern Mississippi and has taught both regular and gifted elementary students in Mississippi. She also revised the Handbook of English Language Learners for K-12 students as an educational consultant for the state of Mississippi. She comes to the Center after working as an Assistant Professor at Nicholls State University in Louisiana.



Dr. Carol Tieso is our new Assistant Professor of Gifted Education. She holds a B.S. in political science and an M.S. in international relations and taught middle and high school in California for 16 years before becoming interested in gifted education. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut and

Continued on page 9, Announcements



Announcements

(cont'd from page 8)

served as Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Alabama before coming to the College of William and Mary.

We also welcome the following new students to the graduate programs.

Doctoral Students:

Bronwyn MacFarlane earned both a B.S. in Secondary Education and a M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction with a minor in Literacy from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She holds a second masters degree in Counseling from Stephens College, a private Missouri women's college. She has seven years' experience as a teacher of multiple preparations across grades 7-12 for Gifted, French, and Social Studies classes. Bronwyn works at the Center as a research assistant.

Wilma Sharp earned her master's degree in gifted education from the College of William and Mary in 2004 and is returning this year to begin work on her doctorate. She is a teacher at Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School here in Williamsburg and was selected as a Teaching Fellow by the Center for Gifted Education in 2001.

Master's Students:

Megan Balduf, a former New Yorker, graduated from the College of William and Mary in 2003. She returns to the College after 2 years of teaching integrated language arts at Dozier Middle School in Newport News. She is working as a graduate assistant with Project Clarion.

Easter Christopher graduated in 1995 from Christopher Newport University with a degree in English and elementary education. After a 10-year hiatus to raise her family, she is looking forward to working in the field of gifted education. She is editing the *Systems* newsletter as a graduate assistant at the Center.

Christy Close holds a B.A. in drama and English literature from Randolph-Macon College and an M.A. in educational theater from New York University. She taught English literature and served as faculty advisor of the drama department at Stuyvesant High School in New York City. She is studying school counseling with an emphasis on gifted students and working as a graduate assistant with several special projects.

Vickie Daley received her BS in elementary education with a minor in music from the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque and spent one semester teaching fourth and fifth grade. She is working as a graduate assistant at the Center.

Mandy Fordham hails from Littleton, Colorado, where she was gifted and talented facilitator at Runyon Elementary School for three years. She also worked as a multi-exceptional facilitator in the



Center for Gifted Education's Graduate Assistants from l to r (standing): Mandy Fordham, Victoria Daley, Easter Christopher, and Bronwyn MacFarlane; (kneeling from l to r): Lydia Lassalle, Andrew Wnek, and Elizabeth Sanger.

Littleton Public Schools. She completed her undergraduate degree at Miami University in Special Education, emphasis in Mild/Moderate Disabilities and Gifted/Talented Education.

Peggy Jacquot earned a BS in elementary education from Baylor University in 1990. She has taught a variety of subjects in multiple settings, ranging from enrichment workshops for the US Space Foundation to technology classes for PreK through junior high school learners. She comes to the College of William and Mary from San Diego, where she taught second grade at a private Christian school.

Lydia Lassalle is originally from Pearl River, Louisiana. In May, 2005, she graduated from Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama with a

Continued on page 10, Announcements



Center for Gifted Education's Graduate Assistants from l to r: Elizabeth Crawford, Peggy Jacquot, Megan Balduf, Andrew Wnek, and Denise Drain.

Systems is a newsletter published by:
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Project STAR

(cont'd from page 7)

traditionally identified gifted students across a span of six years (2000-2005), thanks to the GIFT dataset provided by the South Carolina State Department of Education. We also examined academic performance of South Carolina gifted students in relationship to the route of identification longitudinally (2001-2004) in the area of English language arts and mathematics.

The analysis of the South Carolina GIFT data showed that Project STAR performance tasks continued to identify higher proportions of gifted students of low income background, African Americans, and female students than the traditional aptitude and achievement method for six consecutive years. Students' identified strength areas were consistent with their performance level in the corresponding areas of English language arts and mathematics of PACT, the South Carolina state assessment (2001-2004).

Traditionally identified gifted students outperformed

Project STAR-identified students in both areas for four years, although the magnitude of difference was small. Gifted female students in South Carolina outperformed their male counterparts in English language arts and male gifted students did better than females in mathematics. With regard to ethnicity, an achievement gap was still evident, with White students outperforming Black and Hispanic students on both areas of the state assessment (PACT) from 2001-2004. Asian students appeared to be an exception, with performance equal to or better than White students, particularly in mathematics, over the years.

A report documenting both quantitative and qualitative findings and making recommendations will be produced for the South Carolina State Department of Education this fall.

Announcements

(cont'd from page 9)

Bachelor's degree in education and certifications in elementary, early childhood, special, and collaborative education. As a graduate assistant at the Center, she will be coordinating the Focusing on the Future conference.

Elizabeth Sanger is a graduate of Dickinson College (B.A. Psychology) and the College of William and Mary (M.A.Ed. Elementary Education). She is currently a student in the College of William and Mary M.A.Ed. Gifted Education program and a graduate assistant at the Center.



Research Update on Project Synergy

This year, the Center for Gifted Education has been collaborating with researchers and practitioners from the National Institute of Education and the Gifted Branch of the Singapore Ministry of Education on a cross-cultural study of secondary gifted classroom teaching practices. Titled Project Synergy, this study spearheaded the Center's efforts to study gifted education at an international level.

There are two main purposes for this study: to examine similarities and differences in teaching practices used with gifted learners in selective secondary schools in Singapore and the United

States and to delve into perspectives of selective secondary teachers and administrators on exemplary teaching practices within each culture and how that

has shaped their teaching practice.

Using the College of William and Mary-developed Classroom Observation Scale-Revised (COS-R, VanTassel-Baska, Avery, Struck, Feng, Bracken, Drummond, & Stambaugh, 2003), the research team collected observation data on 67 Singapore 9th and 10th grade gifted class teachers and 42 American Advanced Placement teachers across a variety of subjects. In order to focus on strategies used with relatively homogeneous groups of identified gifted students, different grade levels were included.

Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska conducted face-to-face interviews with seven nominated best teachers in each of the seven subject areas and seven administrators in charge of curriculum and instruction in Singapore this August. Gifted branch officers were also surveyed on their perceptions of

the best teaching practices.

In the coming months, the research team will finish data collection and analyses, presenting and sharing results at the coming National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Convention.



NEW EDITION!

AVAILABLE THROUGH ALLYN AND BACON

THIRD EDITION COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM FOR GIFTED LEARNERS

JOYCE VANTASSEL-BASKA
TAMRA STAMBAUGH

Comprehensive Curriculum for Gifted Learners provides a theoretical, research-based framework and practical ideas for writing, implementing, and adapting curriculum for gifted learners in a standards-based era.

Topics addressed include: various curriculum theories, the Integrated Curriculum Model,

curriculum reform, a process for curriculum design and development, culminating in examples of key curriculum products.

New to This Edition:

- Adaptations and connections to national standards.
- At-risk populations
- Accommodating special needs.
- Technology connections
- Assessment and evaluation
- Updated graphic organizers, lesson plans, relevant examples, and model curricula.
- Guiding questions for discussion at the end of each chapter

Contents

PART ONE - THE PROCESS OF CURRICULUM MAKING

Curriculum for the Gifted: Past, Present, & Future
Curriculum Design Issues in Developing a Curriculum for the Gifted
Curriculum Development Processes
Developing Key curriculum Products

PART TWO - ADAPTING CURRICULUM TO GIFTED LEARNER NEEDS IN CORE DOMAINS

Differentiating Curriculum: The Process
Reading and Language Arts Curriculum for the Gifted Learner
Language Study for Gifted Learners
Mathematics Curriculum for the Gifted Learner
Social Studies Curriculum and the Gifted Learner
Science Curriculum for the Gifted

PART THREE - ADAPTING CURRICULUM TO GIFTED LEARNER NEEDS IN NON-CORE DOMAINS

Leadership Curriculum for the Gifted
Arts curriculum for the Gifted
Affective Curriculum and Instruction for Gifted Learners
Developing Interdisciplinary Curriculum through Humanities Study
Accommodating Special Populations of Gifted Students through Tailored Curriculum Experiences

PART FOUR - SCAFFOLDING INSTRUCTION TO SUPPORT DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM

Teaching Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Research
Teaching Creativity
Using Technology to Supplement Gifted Curriculum
Instructional Strategies in Programs for the Gifted
Instructional Management Strategies for Effective Curriculum Implementation

PART FIVE - THE PROCESS OF CURRICULUM CHANGE

Assessment of Gifted Student Learning
Educational Leadership in Gifted Programs

Upcoming Center For Gifted Education Events

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

January 21, 2006

NATIONAL CURRICULUM NETWORK CONFERENCE

March 6-8, 2006

PROFESSIONAL SUMMER INSTITUTE ON CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

JUNE 26-28, 2006

SATURDAY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 11, 2006 - MARCH 25, 2006

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

July 31, 2006 - August 4, 2006

Center for Gifted Education
announces
The Eleventh Annual
National Curriculum Network Conference

March 6-9, 2006

Keynote Speakers:

Dr. Linda Silverman
Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska

Featured Speaker:

Michael Thompson

Joyce, much of this information is pending. I am waiting on Dawn to give me confirmed information about NCNC.

Registration materials available by contacting the Center for Gifted Education at 757-221-2166 or from our web site, www.cfge.wm.edu/profdev.php.

Systems
Newsletter

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