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School Counselors and Educators of the Gifted: Growing Collaborative Partnerships

by Dr. Susannah Wood

Planting Seeds

Teaching gifted students can be a challenging prospect. Literature suggests that teachers of all types experience significant stress due to classroom discipline and the management of student behavior (Clemens, 2007). Stress in turn impacts teachers' ability and perceived efficacy to manage a classroom (Clemens, 2007); this may be especially true for gifted educators who manage a myriad of different roles and responsibilities.

One source of support for gifted educators may be found in the professional school counselor who can help address many of the concerns gifted students may have. The primary responsibility of school counselors is the establishment of a results-based school counseling program which facilitates the achievement of all students and which encompasses services to students, their parents, the school building, and the community (American School Counselor Association, 2003). The school counselor may already be actively involved in the identification of gifted students, the provision of resources and materials, and counseling activities which address the academic, career and personal/social needs of the gifted through individual and group guidance (American School Counselor Association, 2001).

Professional school counselors also recognize the importance of collaboration when it comes to serving their student populations, and are trained to collaborate through their counselor preparation programs (ASCA, 2003). Such training allows counselors to be specialists in human relationships, brokers of resources and services, and promoters

of positive student outcomes and team building (Allen, 1994 cited in Murphy, DeEsch, & Strein, 1998).

By working together, school counselors and gifted educators can plant successful seeds of collaboration. To do that, however, both parties need to identify some commonalities they have with regard to their roles and responsibilities within educational settings.

Branches of the Same Tree

Gifted educators and professional school counselors share commonalities in preparation, competencies, characteristics and professional development (Croft, 2003). These include the following: affiliation with national organizations which have published sets of standards (National Association for Gifted Children and the American School Counselor Association), possible overlap in graduate training including education and curriculum foundation courses, requirements to demonstrate accountability for student success in a variety of domain areas, and similar roles and responsibilities which may be articulated differently. These roles and responsibilities can include: developing and implementing programs, administering and interpreting tests (achievement, IQ, standardized etc.), providing professional development, acting as consultant, advocate, and leader on behalf of students and parents, planning academic pathways and course placements, working with college and career trajectories, addressing social and emotional issues, and accessing and referring students and

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families to local and national resources and opportunities.

One would assume that given such commonalities, these parties would naturally gravitate towards one another and form collegial relationships in order to serve gifted students and their families and in so doing offer greater wrap-around services and decrease frustration and stress. However, gifted educators and school counselors have had little documented collaborative dialogue and not much is known about how these two groups work collegially on behalf of gifted students.

The Roots of the Relationship

The following section will explore different facets of the collaborative relationship between gifted educators and school counselors, common obstacles to collaboration, and tips and strategies for working with these obstacles. From the results of a qualitative study conducted with gifted educators (Wood, manuscript in progress), several concerns that gifted educators report revolve around the nature of the collaborative relationship itself which is

impacted by time, logistics, confusion regarding rules and responsibilities, and finding a common language.

- **Time.** Probably the most difficult obstacle to overcome in collaborating is the lack of time to nurture a potential collaborative relationship. Lack of dedicated time may spring from already overcrowded schedules, logistical issues such as serving multiple buildings and lack of support for finding time (Bemak, 2000; Hobbs & Collison, 1995).

Strategies - Both parties may wish to investigate time outside their daily schedule to meet off school grounds simply to facilitate dialogue and to get to know each other if a relationship has not been established. Both can discuss scheduling and block out time simply to meet, not just to problem solve. As meetings continue both parties may find a wide variety of areas and avenues in which to collaborate. If both parties feel that their school culture does not support collaboration, then one option is to address the administration together to express a need for dedicated

collaboration time. Both should come with an idea of how to relay to administrators the ways in which collaborative efforts can provide the "most bang for the buck" in terms of time, resources and results. Conversations with administrators may help pave the way to freeing up time to plan and collaborate. Investing the time is a critical first step to building a collaborative relationship.

- **Logistics.** Facilitating collaboration is almost impossible when the cooperating parties are consistently on the run. Gifted educators and school counselors alike are continually inundated with the need for covering all the services they provide, often between multiple buildings which can be miles apart. Both professionals are typically required to give 100% to each service and each building, which can add to stress and minimize time for collaboration. One gifted educator reported that while she and the school counselor shared the

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From the Editor

Fall is a transition time for many of us. At the Center we welcome new students, kick-off a new semester, and begin preparing for the fall conference season as well as planning for the Center's spring offerings. The lead article in this issue of *Systems* is by a graduate of the College who is also a friend of the Center. Dr. Susannah Wood is now at the University of Iowa. Her article on how gifted educators and school counselors can collaborate to serve gifted learners is accompanied by a reading resource list for those working with these students. This issue's theme of supporting the social-emotional lives of gifted learners is also seen in the interview with Dr. Tracy Cross of Ball State University that was conducted by Dr. Suzanne Henson, also a graduate of William and Mary and Center friend.

Included in this issue of *Systems* are Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska's comments from the annual Center for Gifted Education luncheon to honor master's and doctoral graduates of gifted education programs. Dissertation abstracts from this year's doctoral graduates are included along with updates of some changes at the Center. You can read about our new graduate assistants, and learn what awards our faculty, students, and units have received. Finally, we would like to invite you to attend our 14th annual National Curriculum Network Conference, to be held March 11-13, 2009. The call for proposal form as well as the registration form are available on our web site, www.cfge.wm.edu/professional_ncnc.htm.

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same room, they never saw each other because of their various duties and responsibilities (Wood, manuscript in progress).

Strategies - Overcoming logistical barriers can be difficult since reassigning buildings and duties to ease service delivery may be impractical or impossible. However, addressing logistics can serve as a source of bonding between school counselors and gifted educators since each may be able to relate to being pulled in different directions. Once a dedicated time has been chosen to meet, the next issue to resolve is where to meet. One idea is to meet off the school property or find some neutral place in the building that is secure but not in either party's office. When each party is comfortable with each other, then meetings can be moved. A second idea is to examine when each party is in the building and find a common time to meet. In light of technological advances, email may be the best way to schedule and "meet" keeping the constraints of confidentiality in mind. Gifted educators indicated that counselors' willingness to be available, openness and accessibility were critical in their collaborative efforts (Wood, manuscript in progress). It would appear that sheer will and determination to meet can override logistical obstacles.

- Confusion regarding roles and responsibilities. Depending on what type of training school counselors and gifted educators received in their preparation programs, each party may be mystified about what the other actually does during the course of a day. Gifted educators reported that they saw their school counselors in an array of roles including advocate, consultant, leader, counselor and parent liaison (Wood, manuscript in progress). Gifted educators also wear a variety of "hats" in their program which can lend itself to confusion over "who does what."

Confusion about expectations, roles and responsibilities, and a lack of

acknowledgement about areas of expertise can create a significant block to collaboration (Bemak, 2000; Davis & Garrett, 1998). Confusion over roles and a lack of trust and communication can lead to territoriality over students, space and expertise which inhibit sharing and collaborative efforts (Gonzalez, Nelson, Gutkin, & Shwery, 2004).

Strategies - The primary strategy for overcoming confusion is open communication. First, gifted educators and school counselors must determine what they do not know about each other and their services and what assumptions they hold about each other's responsibilities. Through this type of open dialogue both parties have the chance to discover what the other is actually doing on a daily basis. If gifted educators and school counselor have handouts typically used with parents and students detailing their roles and responsibilities, they may consider sharing these prior to the first meeting and using these documents as a basis of conversation. If these are not available, consider browsing the districts' job description and/or each party's national organization website. There may be some happy surprises as they find commonalities in experiences as well as some challenges in exploring unacknowledged myths about job expectations.

Second, before open dialogue can begin, both parties must determine the tone of the conversations. Respect and honor for and appreciation of opinions and view points can help unlock each party's frame of reference and improve where they stand in terms of understanding each other and the process. Questions and hesitations must be acknowledged and respected. Language may need to be reframed to reflect a mutual stance towards problem solving. Instead of "my student" or "my job" consider using "our students" or "our services."

Third, an open and honest conversation

about the role of confidentiality and ethical guidelines and policies must occur. Neither party should see the other as holding back or deliberately withholding information; hence both must thoroughly understand the role confidentiality plays in collaboration. Each may wish to share and discuss their party's ethical guidelines and any policies such as FERPA that may play a part in future collaborative efforts.

- Mistrust of the process. Inherent in the collaboration process is the concept of change. Changes are made in schedules, logistics, in perspectives, and in ways of working, all of which can lead to feelings of discomfort and dislike for the collaboration process (Bemak, 2000). Both parties may hold some assumptions about the process including the following: a total focus on "fixing" the problem, a lack of desire to share information based on distrust of the process, a belief that collaboration may result in a loss of status or expertise, or a misperception that either party "isn't good enough" to solve a problem on their own (Gonzalez et al., 2004; Hobbs & Collison, 1995; Murphy et al., 1998).

Strategies: Confusion over aspects of the process must first be distinguished from mistrust between the two parties. Thus, true collaborative work, either on

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From the Executive Director Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska

Coping with Change: How Do We Proceed

The world is changing. Our leading Democratic national candidate uses change loosely as a campaign slogan. Technology has advanced and encroached into our lives in amazing and exponential ways. E-mail alone has created a 24/7 mentality about communication. Global warming has brought changes to the Arctic ice shelf and to the frequency and intensity of natural disasters around the world, the cyclone in Myanmar only the latest. Our capacity to make democracy work is changing, seriously compromised by the gridlock of special interests, pulling us away from solving the big problems of health care, energy, and social security.

And our mental conception of the skills to be needed in the 21st century has also changed. We no longer are a knowledge society but rather one that requires innovation and creation. Why is that the case? We are outsourcing high level white collar jobs to India and elsewhere because the knowledge levels are there. Computers can “think logically” better than humans as seen in the chess matches with Kasparov, a world class player. We need innovation to drive the economy and maintain supremacy in the realms of science, business and technology. We need architects to develop blueprints for solving our problems.

Daniel Pink, author of *The Whole New Brain*, suggests that there are six senses that people will need to be successful in this century. They include: design, symphony, empathy, story, and play. Each of these are interesting to contemplate.



Design skills are

essential now for any kind of business. In education, we must market our products whether they are programs or services. For example, we all must have websites that attract interest and reflect aesthetic principles as well as substantive ones. We must even market ourselves through a clever blog. The Center's *What Works* and 20 Year report were put together by designers, able to synchronize text and pictures into a pleasing whole.

Seeing the big picture and making connections among disparate data are requisite skills for functioning in a world of ever greater facts, bits of information, and distracting minutiae. It will be the connectors within society that will prevail as they can piece together meaning from these disparate sources of data.

In a world that is becoming ever more diverse, people need to develop the skills of empathy to high levels, understanding how others feel and think about their world. In order for meaningful collaboration to occur, people must appreciate others, and develop an understanding of their issues and problems in order to motivate and inspire.

Roger Schank, a leading cognitive scientist, has remarked on how logic does not come naturally to man but stories do. Narratives have become central to the training of doctors in this century as they must understand the patient story in order to be helpful. Teachers are encouraged to focus on case studies of students to understand the complex interplay of race, gender and class as well as school and home variables. Case law is the basis for understanding how law transforms society and makes policy change.

And the role of play in helping us deal with complex lives is also a critical component. Pink notes that work is not the opposite of

play but rather depression. Play must be inherent in our work lives as well as our at home lives. Play can be seen as an attitude toward being open, experimental, and happy in ourselves.

What are the implications for today's graduates of this new reality? Of the new harbingers of change? I believe that there are several issues that our graduates must be able to grasp and be proactive on if they want to be successful. They are the following:

1. Use the creative skills you have learned in the program on a daily basis. Write 3 pages about whatever comes into your head. Create metaphors for practice in understanding problems. Give yourself an hour a week to create in your medium of choice. Use creative problem-solving to work through problems with others.
2. Create narrative to explain to others your ideas. A case history of a child does a better job of laying out the issues of promising learners in poverty than the sharing of all the research findings in the world.
3. Make connections from gifted education to special and general education on a regular basis. Try to think of how what works with gifted students would work with all learners. How could differentiation principles be applied to professional development, to staffing, to scheduling as well as just curriculum and instruction?
4. Develop networks of people in your setting that share your interests and passions and can inculcate you against the problems all around. Deliberately create diverse group membership that

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Executive Director

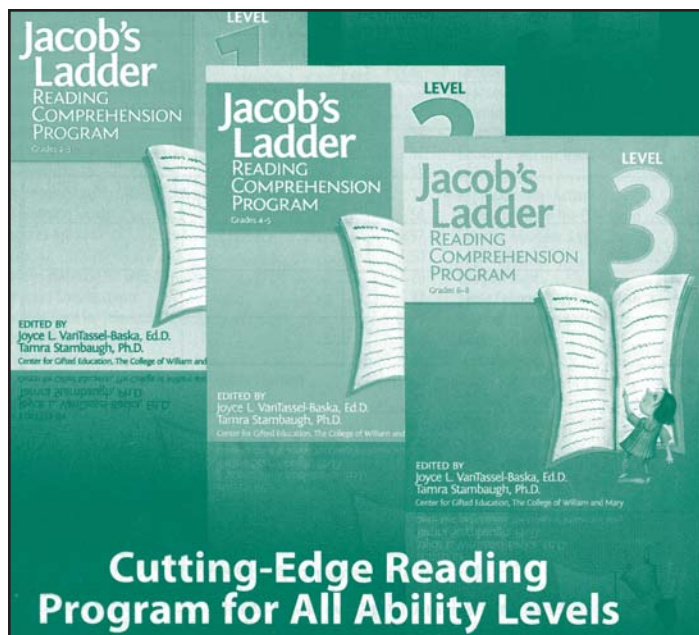
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will give you insight into other's worlds. Talk openly about racism, sexism, class and economic struggles and how educational opportunities can help overcome these inequalities.

5. Develop the light touch. Use humor to defuse tension and to stimulate thinking through putting people at ease. When I first started doing speeches, my mentor told me to begin with a joke, no matter how corny, to get an audience to go along with you. So I would try the psychologist story, then my self-deprecating coaching story, and then in desperation I would create the analogy of the necessary joke to salad bars in restaurants-an obligatory staple. You will come up with better ways to make humor work for you, just do it.
6. Experiment in your work. Try new techniques in your teaching. Explore new methodologies to conduct your research. Develop a new program because it is needed to contribute to community service in your geographic area. Be playful in your job; see it as a challenge to create meaningful work, not just fulfilling a job description or meeting others' expectations. Set your own and operationalize them just as the doctoral students here have had to operationalize their ideas in order to carry out a dissertation.
7. Finally, I would recommend using another strategy we have taught you in the gifted course strand-bibliotherapy. Read books for what they can offer you in terms of understanding your world better. I have been on sabbatical this year, working on two books and several research projects. Yet I kept a reading journal to help me reflect on what I thought and how a particular book impacted my thinking. A few recommendations: read Carol Dweck's *Mindset* to understand the importance of effort in concert with ability, read Daniel Pink's *Whole New Mind* to understand how right brain thinking and integrative thinking may prevail, read The artist's way to gain control over your creative potential, and read the novelist Ian McEwan (*Atonement*, *Chesil Beach*, *Saturday*) to understand post modern life in respect to relationships and work.

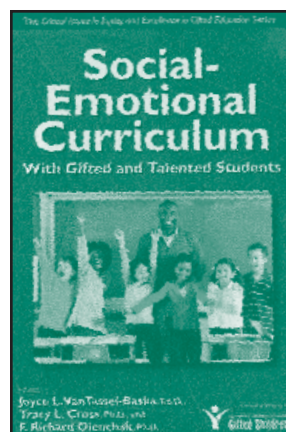
Lucretius, in *De Rerum Natura* noted that all things change, they melt and become no longer what we knew them to be. Change is the nature of things, even of a career in education. But you have the knowledge and skills to address the changes you encounter. You have the leadership potential to make a real difference in the real lives of children and adult learners. Impacting others and empowering them to make positive change in their lives is the ultimate test of an effective educator. I have every reason to believe that you all will be successful in that challenge. 📖 📖 📖

Available through Prufrock Press



Intended as a supplement to the William & Mary language arts units for young students, *Jacob's Ladder* targets reading comprehension skills in high ability learners. In the form of three skill ladders connected to individual readings in poetry, myths/fables, and nonfiction, students move from lower order, concrete thinking skills to higher order, critical thinking skills.

Jacob's Ladder Reading Comprehension Program will be available on October 15, 2008.



New this fall from Prufrock Press (Prufrock.com), *Social Emotional Curriculum with Gifted and Talented Students* provides a thorough introduction to methods for developing social-emotional curricula for use with this population. Edited by Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Dr. Tracy Cross, and Dr. Rick Olenchak, this volume contains chapters by leaders in the field such as Sydney Moon, Thomas Hebert, Joe Renzulli, and George Betts. The authors address a number of topics, including preventing suicide, arts

curriculum, affective curriculum for diverse learners, developing secondary counseling programs, and professional development for promoting social emotional development. This book will serve as a useful resource for teachers, administrators, and anyone interested in seeking the best for our gifted and talented learners.

Picture Source: Prufrock Press

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an individual child case or on a larger scale such as designing small groups or classroom activities, should be put on hold until each party has gotten to know each other (including work styles, training and services). Trust must be in place before change can occur. Each party must be able to trust the other with problems and concerns and be able to depend on one another to be there when needed.

Second, both school counselors and gifted educators need to air what they feel about change and the collaborative process including feelings of wariness, frustration, loss of identity or value. These discussions may open the eyes of both parties to see that they have more feelings and reactions to the process in common than first expected.

Third, both parties should be knowledgeable about what collaboration entails. Depending on the training received, each may have very different ideas of what collaboration looks like and what is expected. This should be discussed more than once. In fact, a basic 'check in' about the process should occur each time both parties meet. Both may wish to investigate books, articles or other materials that outline a collaborative process upon which both can agree.

- Sharing the same language. An often overlooked aspect of the collaborative relationship is the actual language used when conversing. Both parties may come with explicit or implicit ideas of what the other does or should do. While school counselors and gifted educators may have more in common than not, that does not mean that each party has the same set of expertise. Because each is trained differently, they may understand or connote words and terms very differently. Reactions to words or phrases such as "acceleration," "mixed ability grouping," and "IEP" may be very different. Ideas about what each party would do or how they would act on each idea will vary based on their training and role. Several gifted educators acknowledged that a basic understanding of gifted needs is a critical component for school counselors to be able to work together with gifted educators (Wood, manuscript in progress). Likewise, several acknowledged that their knowledge regarding how to counsel was limited and that they relied on their school counselors' expertise in that area (Wood, manuscript in progress).

Strategies- Before any real work is done it is vital that both parties discuss and share their backgrounds and training. Each brings a unique set of expertise, knowledge, and skills which should be respected. As school counselors and gifted educators work through this, they may be frustrated initially with a lack of understanding that prior training may not have given them. Time should be set aside to discuss some common "buzz" words and ideas (ex: what does counseling look like for a gifted student? What do we mean by acceleration?)

In order to facilitate a positive working relationship, both parties must surrender, to an extent, their expertise and power so that they can learn from one another. This abdication requires the risky proposition of saying, "I don't understand, can you tell me what that means?" or "I don't know how to do that." These questions can leave the question-asking party open and vulnerable to a variety of reactions. Honor and respect should undergird these conversations so that instead of feeling defensive about a lack of understanding regarding a topic, a feeling of excitement over an opportunity to learn and grow permeates. One idea is to consider these meetings as informal professional development opportunities.

A second idea is to actually attend and/or host professional development offerings together which not only enhances each party' repertoire of skill but also allows for more common language with which to discuss and apply to students.

Buds and Flowers

Collaboration brings great rewards for those parties involved including an opportunity to interact with other professionals, a reduction in workload, and the chance of resolving the issue that began the collaborative process (Gonzalez et al., 2004). Additional benefits for school counselors and gifted educators include improved communication, increased and continuous feedback, the identification of a wider resource-base for both parties, stronger interpersonal and collegial relationships (Hobbs & Collison, 1995), and more effective problem-solving (Hoskins et al., 2007). For gifted educators and school counselors the benefits seem to outweigh the obstacles if a strong relationship through an initial understanding of and respect for the individual roles is established.

Once a relationship has been grown, where do school counselors and gifted educators go from there? The following are ideas from gifted educators for areas of collaboration with school counselors (Wood, manuscript in progress):

- Mutual involvement with identification;
- Classroom and individual activities that work with personal/social issues such as bullying, emotional regulation, coping, organization, and stress relief;
- Collaboratively facilitating small groups for gifted students;
- Collaborative interventions for underachieving gifted students and twice exceptional students;
- Collaborative academic planning (ex: four year plans for high school students);
- Joint parent liaison work such as workshops on parenting a gifted child, academic planning, career and college searches, and communication of a gifted child's concerns to parents;
- Sharing of resources including local mental health counseling, family counseling and substance abuse services; local, regional and national enrichment and summer programs;
- College and career support: planning for life after high school, life

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skills, decision-making regarding colleges, scholarships;

- Attending collaborative conferences;
- Collaborative development of training workshops combining skills and expertise

As with any relationship, collaborative efforts between school counselors and gifted educators need to be cultivated so they can continue to grow. Remember to take time to care for one another, and nurture an attitude of self-care to combat daily stress. Collaboration is a central service component, not “just another thing to do” (Hobbs & Collison, 1995), and it is designed to make a powerful impact on the lives of gifted students and their families. Above all, take time out to celebrate successful projects or tasks accomplished. Everyone needs a little time in the sun.

Suggested Readings

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Dr. Susannah Wood is an Assistant Professor at the University of Iowa's school counseling program.

An Exploration of the Impact of Family on the Achievement of African American Gifted Learners Originating From Low-Income Environments

by Joy Davis, Virginia Union University

The purpose of this study was to determine what, if any, impact families have on the academic achievement of African American gifted learners from low-income environments. This grounded theory study was designed to explore family and student perceptions of a complex set of variables related to families and home environments. The variables explored were based on a conceptual framework developed from previous research related to social capital and its uses within families with limited economic resources. Study participants were junior and senior level high school students and their parents.

Instruments included a demographic questionnaire with open-ended questions, a researcher-developed interview protocol and the Moos Family Environment Scale. Based on the findings, certain 'social capital' resources were revealed: family cohesion; strong relationships with mothers; family to student discussions related to education and positive achievement; the role of the extended family (particularly aunts and cousins); emphasis on religious identity development; and the role of fathers are noted as having impact on school achievement. Another notable source of capital revealed was the intrinsic motivation and resilience of each of the students based on parent and student responses to interview questions.

The most pronounced findings were the role of the mother as nurturer and encourager; the flexible role of extended family members who provide additional support; the emphasis within the households on positive achievement orientation, and certain family traditions which taken together form a cohesive, supportive family environment, even in the midst of challenging life circumstances. In addition to the social capital provided by families, this study also revealed other sources of positive impact including special school-based programs and internal traits. Implications for future research include the design of a controlled study of African American families of gifted students utilizing the Moos & Moos Family Environment Scale (FES), a study of the support structure provided by mothers of gifted learners across a variety of cultural contexts, and a study of the intrinsic motivation and resilience of at-risk African American gifted learners. Implications for educational practice include improving professional development for educators, family and parent education programs, and enhancing guidance and counseling programs for African American and other culturally diverse gifted learners.   

Teachers' Attitudes and Practices Toward Differentiating for Gifted Learners in K-5 General Education Classrooms

by J. Denise Drain, Maryville University of Saint Louis

Despite research that demonstrates the advantages of teaching gifted students in homogeneous groups, including more academic growth, better social and emotional health, and increased motivation, educational practice is shifting more and more toward total inclusion for all students.

Teacher attitudes and perceptions toward gifted students are variable and may correlate positively with certain demographic characteristics. Studies suggest that few teachers use differentiation strategies in their classrooms. Teachers who receive training and ongoing support in using a curriculum based on the Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM) differentiate more often and more successfully than other teachers. Differentiated curriculum results in significantly higher academic growth than other curriculums. Research suggests a number of curriculum and instructional practices which align with the Integrated Curriculum Model and show promise with gifted learners.

A descriptive study was conducted to analyze the attitudes and classroom practices of 59 classroom teachers in grades K-5. Teachers completed surveys which included the Attitudes toward Gifted Students and the Classroom Practices Questionnaire. The researcher conducted classroom observations using the Classroom Observation Scale-Revised. Survey and observation data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, T-tests, and ANOVA.




Findings suggest teacher attitudes ranged from somewhat negative to very positive with no correlation to the demographic data. Teachers were found to differentiate for gifted students infrequently, with a large number reporting that they never differentiate. They were also more likely to use strategies that have not been verified as gifted-friendly practice.

Recommendations for future research are centered in four

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areas: empirical research to further identify strategies and methods that benefit gifted students differentially to support or refute anecdotal evidence; research to study the efficacy of specific types of professional development that positively impact teacher attitudes and practices, especially toward gifted students in the regular classroom; research on the role of the administrator in promoting differentiated instruction, and the use of gifted-friendly practices to effectively differentiate for gifted students in the regular classroom.   

An Exploratory Study of Creativity-Fostering Teacher Behaviors In Secondary Classrooms

by Matt Edinger, Chesterfield County Public Schools

The purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate creativity-fostering teacher behaviors in the context of the high-stakes standardized testing environment. Data were collected through a combination of teacher self-report surveys, investigator observations, and in-depth interviews. Preliminary findings suggest that 9th and 10th grade teachers utilize creativity-fostering behaviors to a moderate

degree in the classroom. Ten behavioral strategies are identified which appear to be utilized with a high degree of effectiveness in the classroom. Additionally, factors are identified which may impede or facilitate the use of creativity-fostering behaviors. Implications for practice and research are discussed.   


Award Winning Curriculum

At the National Association for Gifted Children's (NAGC) annual conference in November, the curriculum studies division will present an outstanding curriculum award to the Center for the science unit *Budding Botanists at Work*. This will be the 14th unit developed by the Center to receive this award.

Unit Description

Budding Botanists, a 2nd grade life science unit, engages students in a scenario-based approach to investigating plant life. While assuming the role of botanists to understand the structure, nature, and life cycle of plants, the team members seek to answer questions through problem solving activities. This unit builds upon students' prior knowledge of plant life and encourages them to use inquiry skills to observe, gather evidence, analyze data, and make inferences. The overarching concept of systems is used to deepen understanding of the scientific concepts in the unit.


This unit can be ordered by calling the Center for Gifted Education at (757) 221-2362 or visit the website: www.cfge.wm.edu



Budding Botanists at Work
First and Second Grade
Life Science Unit

Center for Gifted Education
THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY

Project Clarion
Funded by the Jacob K. Javits Program
United States Department of Education





What's Happening at the Center

Graduating this year from the Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership doctoral program with a concentration in gifted education were: Joy Davis, Denise Drain, and Matt Edinger. Graduates of the Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in gifted education master's program were Gokhan Oztunc, Chris McCormick, Kellie McKay, Rebecca Walter. We wish them all the best in their future endeavors.



It is always with mixed emotions that we share the news of the departure of any Center staff member. While we are happy to see them off to positions that provide new challenges, and show that others recognize their abilities, we are sorry to see them go because they will be missed. Dr. Tamra Stambaugh, currently director of grants and special projects at the Center and graduate of

William and Mary, has taken a position at Vanderbilt University as Assistant Professor where she will direct programs for talented youth.

New Staff and Faculty



Dr. Lori Bland graduated from George Washington University and taught in general education classrooms and in a gifted and talented program. Dr. Bland received her masters and doctoral degrees from the University of Virginia in Educational Psychology, with a concentration in gifted education. She worked as a research

assistant with the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. She was also a lead teacher for the gifted and talented program in a rural school division. Dr. Bland has also worked in two large school divisions in the program evaluation and assessment offices. Her dissertation focused on using local resources to develop dependable and reliable district measures of performance. Dr. Bland has also worked in the area of teacher certification and licensure. She is joining the Center as the Director of Project Clarion and Professional Development



Dr. Kyung Hee Kim is an Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology in the School of Education, the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA. She obtained a Ph.D. in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA. Dr. Kim's research interests are: (1) Understanding nature of creativity (by comparing with intelligence, achievement, personality, etc.);

(2) Understanding characteristics of creatively gifted students (and identifying creative students for gifted programs); (3) Assessing creativity (including validity studies for creativity tests); and (4) Nurturing creativity, particularly concerning environmental and cultural interactions with creativity.

Dr. Kim has been selected to receive the 2008 Hollingworth Award, which will be presented on October 31, 2008 at the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)'s 55th Annual Convention in Tampa, FL. She received the highest research awards (the Ronald W. Collins Distinguished Faculty Research Award) and the highest teaching award (The Outstanding Faculty Award-Beyond the Call of Duty Award) from Eastern Michigan University in 2008. In addition, she received other awards for her outstanding research; from Eastern Michigan University (Faculty Scholarship Recognition Award) in 2007; from the NAGC in 2005; from the American Creativity Association (ACA) in 2005; and from the International Council of Psychologists (ICP) in 2004.

New Graduate Assistants

We are pleased to welcome the following new graduate assistants at the Center.



Steve Coxon graduated from Virginia Tech with a BA in English with a minor in biology and an MAEd in secondary English education. He first taught junior and senior English in California, but spent the past seven years teaching fourth and fifth grade language arts, math, and science in southwest Virginia prior to entering the doctoral program at William and Mary. Steve

served as a FIRST Lego League coach for five years and as a therapeutic foster parent for two years. His teaching interests include attempting to meet the needs of gifted students, project-based learning, hands-on science, creative writing, and summer enrichment classes. He also enjoys vegetarian cooking and organic gardening, bluegrass music, biotope aquariums, chess and other strategy games, international travel, biking, hiking, scuba diving, and flat water kayaking and canoeing with his wife, Krystal.



Hope Deighton is a Master's student in the community counseling program. Besides working at the Center, she assists Dr. Bruce Bracken with his Intermediate Statistics class. Hope graduated from Purdue University with a B.A. in psychology. Outside of work and class, she enjoys the outdoors, theater, music, and watching Big Ten football. Hope is very excited to be a part of the William and Mary community.



After completing her BS in Psychology from Mary Washington College, Krystin moved to Florida where she has spent the last three years working at Walt Disney World in various positions. She enjoyed her time in Florida, but is glad to be back in Virginia! She is currently working towards a Master's degree in School Counseling and looking forward to the future.



Shannon Henry is pursuing a MA Ed. in Gifted Education. Prior to attending William and Mary, she graduated from Elmira College with a Bachelor's degree in English Literature, Elementary Education Grades 1-6, and Adolescence Education: English Literature Grades 7-12. She has student taught in Scotland and is looking into teaching overseas. Shannon is working as a Graduate Assistant on Project Clarion.



After growing up in Charlottesville, Virginia Christina moved to rival territory and graduated from Virginia Tech in December 2007 with a B.S. in Mathematics. While there she worked in Blacksburg Middle School as a student intern and at Blacksburg High School as a Special Education Aide. Now Christina is spending her time in Williamsburg working on

a Master's degree in Gifted Education and working at the Center for Gifted Education. When Christina is not at school or work she enjoys spending time with her two dogs, Gracie and Marzipan.



Meredith Roberson is from Mechanicsville, Virginia. In May of 2008, she received degrees in Psychology and Spanish from Meredith College in Raleigh, NC. She is working towards a Master's in Community and Addictions Counseling through the School of Education. She hopes to work with children and their family members who are directly or indirectly affected by addictions, developmental disorders, or other mental illnesses.



Kimberley Thoresen graduated from the College of William and Mary in May 2008 with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and elementary education. She is currently working on her master's in curriculum and instruction in the field of gifted education. She is a graduate assistant to the Center's director of curriculum.

Kudos

It is always a pleasure to share any awards received by faculty as well as students in the gifted masters or doctoral programs.



his scholarly work.

Dr. Bracken is a professor within the School of Education's School Psychology & Counselor Education program. He is also co-principal investigator of Project Clarion, a grant awarded by Jacob Javits Department of Education, and a valued staff member of the Center for Gifted Education.



Bronwyn MacFarlane, a doctoral student who recently graduated, received the School of Education Dean's Award for Excellence. In addition, she is a recipient of NAGC's Doctoral Student award at the annual convention. After graduation, Dr. MacFarlane accepted a position as an Assistant Professor at the University of Arkansas - Little Rock.



Valija Rose, another doctoral student and Center graduate assistant, received the prestigious Armand J. & Mary Faust Galfo Education Research Fellowship Award from the School of Education. Valija is the fifth doctoral student in gifted education to receive this award.



Dr. Carol Tieso, Associate Professor in Gifted Education, has received the Class of 1964 Distinguished Associate Professor of Education award. This is a three- year term in which the College has recognized Dr. Tieso's exemplary work in research and her commitment to excellence in education.



Rebecca Walter received the Excellence in Gifted Education master's level award. Rebecca recently graduated and is fulfilling her passion of teaching in Vermont.

An Interview with Dr. Tracy Cross

by Dr. Suzanne Henshon

Tracy, how did you become interested in gifted education?

My awareness of gifted education actually began after my interest in the psychology of gifted people. My interest in gifted education emerged after I first met my wife-to-be in high school and I got to know her siblings very well. There were five children in her family, all of whom were gifted. In my family there were four children and three of us were involved in gifted education. The realization that there were five kids in one family and three in another who were all gifted got me interested in gifted education.

How did you become interested in the social and emotional lives of gifted people?

That started even earlier. When I was young my father owned and ran an art gallery. I spent a lot of time there. I got to know many art professors and artists. Some of them struggled in society; most of them were unconventional and some of them were very conventional. I remember talking to my mother about it. An early lesson I learned was that artists are interesting people and they vary a lot. I came to appreciate talent quite a bit after seeing art that ranged in so many different ways. Exposure to these artists got me started asking questions about their psychological makeup. These questions began when I was five or six years old and that interest has never waned.

What is the one (or 2) most important thing that K-12 educators need to know/be aware of regarding gifted students and their unique social/emotional needs?

Well, the first thing I would say is that all teachers need to understand that the evidence suggests strongly that the health - both mental and physical - of students with gifts and talents is comparable to or better than the general population. So, despite the widely held misconception, generally speaking, gifted children are healthy.

Secondly, the greatest number of social and emotional needs that are unique to children with gifts and talents are contextual and are actually exogenous rather than endogenous. That means that the issues are less about the specific characteristics of the person and more about that particular person interacting within his/her environment. For example, making friends is something that most children grapple with, but how it affects gifted kids can be different. Sometimes the issues they have are in the same category - but nuances are different, say, in the area of college counseling; their interests are different categorically than average children, and there are nuances of difference. Now the big questions - are there large numbers of psychological needs that are unique to gifted children? Some of our colleagues argue that when you consider children who score 180 on the IQ test that mentally they might be so different that issues are unique to them. This could be true. However, the greatest portion of gifted children are able to function quite well in society.



What do you say to educators who claim that

gifted students are like all students, that they don't have S/E needs that are unique to that population?

Well, as I was saying earlier, it is kind of a nonsensical argument. If you are a gifted student with high levels of talent in singing and physics - and you are about to go to college - the advice you get needs to be informed by research on developing talent in those domains.

A common example is that many intellectually gifted students attend school not having intellectual peers in their classes. That is something that very few people experience-- to be kept in your same class with no intellectual peers, making it very difficult to develop friendships.

What inspired you to write The Social & Emotional Lives of Gifted Kids: Understanding & Guiding Their Development?

Well, truthfully the interest probably began years ago at a conference when I talked to Sally Reis. I was told that UCONN was using columns that I had written for Gifted Child Today in class and she urged me to compile them into a book. Until she said that, I had never thought about it. I think it was about 7 years ago that we started working on the first edition. The little unintended book, now in its third incarnation, has sold thousands of copies.

In the early stages of its first update, Joel McIntosh, its publisher, convinced me to change the title by a word, to *The Social & Emotional Lives of Gifted Kids*, using gifted kids instead of gifted children. That change would make it more acceptable to parents and Joel was correct as it began to sell incredible numbers almost immediately. Barnes & Noble carries the book now and sales have skyrocketed.

Can you share a few insights about your experiences as Executive Director of The Indiana Academy of Science, Math, and Humanities?

I worked there about 9 years as executive director. The school has about 300 intellectually gifted children from all across Indiana in residence. No matter how smart they are and what they can do academically, they are children and it is important we don't lose sight of that. They need adult guidance at that age. On the whole they are extremely well behaved; they don't tend to engage in negative behaviors. I was amazed at how few problems we had with the students.

For many gifted children it is hard growing up. They are getting so many mixed messages from our society. Many of them choose to hide a part of themselves. When they come to an environment where they are living with 300 other intellectually gifted students, they blossom. The metaphor some use for these environments is a hot house - they come together and there is extra energy. The faculty makes sacrifices to be there; you have a whole group of people who have chosen to be there to work with these special kids. My experiences at the Academy caused me to rethink issues in our field like perfectionism. When you see so

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An Interview

(Cont'd from page 12)

many gifted adolescents with perfectionism functioning quite well, it caused me to see perfectionism more on a continuum than as a dichotomy. I learned a lot while there and I feel quite fortunate to have been given that opportunity.

What projects are you currently working on?

I have a couple of things in the works. My research team just conducted a very large study of the honors college students at Ball State University in which we investigated 12 different constructs - from perfectionism, to identity formation, to suicide. It was a study that we think will inform the field for many years to come.

I have a series of studies that are more in the neuroscience arena. The first is an eye tracking study among gifted college students; the second uses electroencephalogram technology to measure brain waves during novel learning tasks. We are looking at brain activity in gifted children in the middle to high school range. The third study has been designed to use fMRI technology to conduct brain imaging. We are looking at both the neuroanatomy and functional aspects of the brains of students with gifts and talents. All these studies are sponsored by the Institute for Research on Psychology of Gifted Research at Ball State.

How did you decide to collaborate with Larry Coleman on Being Gifted in School?

This book has an unusual history. When I was a doctoral student, Larry Coleman was a professor working in gifted education. Late in my doctoral program I invited Larry to assist me with my dissertation. I shared his interest in gifted education. We hit it off and started working together on the brand new Tennessee Governor's Schools Program. Larry was working on a textbook back then and I would talk with him while he worked on it. I read a copy of it and I thought that it was great, but the book's publishing company split in half, so the book did not get marketed. Here was a really great mind and people were not aware of what he had produced. Several years later we decided to come up with a new version. Joel McIntosh wanted it to be the

first book that would move the Prufrock Press into the more traditional academic textbook market. Larry and I started working on it and produced the next version in 2002. Since then we have come out with another edition. Collaborating with Larry is like going back to school; he was active in the late 1960's and helped establish the field of gifted education. It was a pretty humbling experience, not because of how he treats you, but because of how much he knows. I certainly learned a lot working on this book. It was a wonderful opportunity that came as a byproduct of other work.

Joyce Van Tassel-Baska, Rick Olenchak and I are editing an NAGC book on affective curriculum that should come out later this year. Co-editing a book has been a new experience for me. Working with Joyce and Rick is quite a treat.

Don Ambrose and I also have a book in the works and it has to do with philosophy. It is very theoretically oriented. We are looking at gifted education through the lenses of economists, philosophers, engineers, many different professions. I am very fortunate to have had very productive friends who I enjoy working with.

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Biography of Dr. Tracy Cross

Dr. Tracy L. Cross, George and Frances Ball Distinguished Professor of Gifted Studies, is the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Research, and Assessment for Teachers College at Ball State University (BSU). For nine years he served BSU as the Executive Director of the Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics and Humanities, a public residential school for intellectually gifted adolescents. Dr. Cross has published well over 100 articles, book chapters, and columns, a coauthored textbook *Being Gifted in School: An Introduction to Development, Guidance and Teaching*, and a supplemental book entitled *On the Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Kids*, both in their second editions. He is the editor of the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* and editor emeritus of the *Roeper Review*, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*, *Research Briefs* and others. He served as president of The Association for the Gifted of the Council for Exceptional Children, was on the Executive Committee and the Board of National Association for Gifted Children.

THE CENTER'S UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday Enrichment Program
(February 14 - March 28, 2009)

National Curriculum Network Conference
(March 11-13, 2009)

Summer Institute
(June 22-24, 2009)

Summer Enrichment Program
(Session I - July 6-10, 2009)
(Session II - July 13-17, 2009)



Suggested Readings for Supporting the Social Emotional Needs of Gifted Students

by Dr. Susannah Wood

- Delisle, J. & Galbraith, J. (2002). *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers: How to Meet Their Social and Emotional Needs*. Free Spirit Publishing: Minneapolis, MN.
- Colangelo, N. & Davis, G.A. (Eds.). (2003). *Handbook of gifted education* (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
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- Kerr, B. (1994). *Smart girls: A new psychology of girls, women and giftedness*. Ohio: Ohio Psychology Press.
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General Social and Emotional Issues

- Blackburn, A.C. & Erickson, D.B. (1986). Predictable crises of the gifted student. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 64, 556-557.
- Buescher, T. & Higham, S. (1990). *Helping adolescents adjust to giftedness*. (Digest No. E489). Reston, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 321494.)
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- Peterson, J.S. (2006). Addressing counseling needs of gifted students. *Professional School Counseling*, 10(1), 43-51.
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- Ford, M.A. (1989). Students' perceptions of affective issues impacting the social-emotional development and school performance of gifted/talented youngsters. *Roeper Review*, 11(3), 131-134.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gifteduc/resources/articles/Emotional%20DramaSMMP.pdf>

Specific Counseling Issues

- Garland, A.F. & Zigler, E. (1999). Emotional and behavioral problems among highly intellectual gifted youth. *Roeper Review*, 22, 41-44.
- Gust-Brey, K. & Cross, T. (1999). An examination of the literature base on the suicidal behaviors of gifted students. *Roeper Review*, 22, 28-35.
- LoCicero, K.A. & Ashby, J.S. (2000). Multidimensional perfectionism in middle school age gifted students: A comparison to peers from the general cohort. *Roeper Review*, 22(3), 182-185.
- Grantham, T. & Ford, D (2003). Beyond self-concept and self-esteem: Racial identity and gifted African American students. *High School Journal*, 87(1), 18-30.
- Orange, C. (1997). Gifted students and perfectionism. *Roeper Review*, 20 (1), 39-42.

Academic Concerns

- Brown, B.B. & Steinberg, L. (1990). Academic achievement and social acceptance: Skirting the "brain-nerd" connection. *Education Digest*, 55(7), 55-60.
- Luscombe, A. & Riley, T.L. (2001). An examination of self-concept in academically gifted adolescents: Do gender differences occur? *Roeper Review*, 24, 20-23.

Career Concerns

- Achter, J.A., Lubinski, D., & Benbow, C.P. (1996). Multipotentiality among the intellectually gifted: "It was never there and already it's vanishing." *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 43(1), 63-76.
- Greene, M. J. (2003). Career adrift? Career counseling of the gifted and talented. *Roeper Review*, 25(2), 66-73.
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Continued on page 15, Suggested Readings



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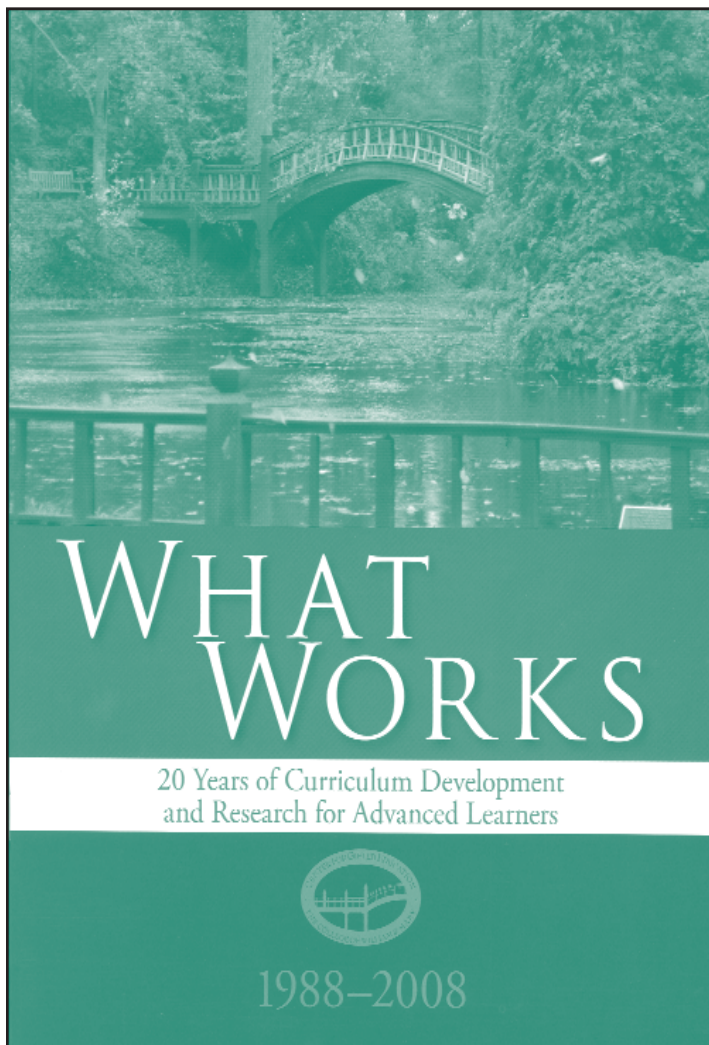
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- Moon, S.M. & Thomas, V. (2003). Family therapy with gifted and talented adolescents. *The Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*, 14(2), 107-113.

Collaboration and Partnerships

- Davis, K.M., & Garrett, M.T. (1998). Bridging the gap between school counselors and teachers: A proactive approach. *Professional School Counseling*, 1(5), 54-56.
- Hobbs, B.B., & Collison, B.B. (1995). School-community agency collaboration: Implications for the school counselor. *School Counselor*, 43(1), 58-64.
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The Center for Gifted Education is celebrating its 20th year of operation. As part of the celebration a publication highlighting “what works,” based on 20 years of curriculum development and research conducted by the Center, was issued. Research findings include the areas of curriculum development, instruction, assessment, and professional development.

Through the use of the Integrated Curriculum Model as a template for design, coupled with curriculum reform emphases in content areas, the Center curriculum has produced positive outcomes in student achievement and teacher use of differentiated strategies. This document is available for download from the Center’s web site, www.cfge.wm.edu.

Join us at the 14th Annual National Curriculum Network Conference

March 11-13, 2009

held at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia

This year's keynote speakers are Dr. Camillia Benbow, dean of the school of education at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee, and Dr. Del Siegle, Associate Professor in the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut.

Not to be missed this year is the Thursday afternoon panel, *Current Trends and Issues in Gifted Education*. Panelists will be Dr. James Gallagher, Professor Emeritus, University of North Carolina, Dr. Karen Rogers, University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, and Dr. Larry Coleman of the University of Toledo, Ohio. The panel moderator will be Dr. Carol Tieso of the College of William and Mary. Please visit www.cfge.wm.edu/ncnc.htm for registration information.

Do you have research-based practices in curriculum, instruction, or assessment that you would like to share? The call for proposal form is also available at our web site.

Seeking Curriculum Developers

The Center for Gifted Education is currently seeking the opportunity to work with people who are experienced in writing curriculum for gifted students. We would like to develop additional instructional units in all subject areas based on the Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM).



Let us know of your interest in joining a small group of educators for launching this new initiative. If you would like more information, please contact Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska (jlvant@wm.edu) or Dr. Kimberley Chandler (klchan@wm.edu). Details will be made available upon inquiry.