

Systems Newsletter

Center for Gifted Education

Spring 2003

The College of William and Mary

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Center for Gifted Education: Strategic Planning

The mission and goal statements of the Center for Gifted Education are articulated in a variety of written forms; but are they checked against what is actually occurring on a daily basis? On November 14, 2002, Center for Gifted Education staff and graduate assistants embarked on a one-day strategic retreat to revisit the mission statement, goals, and future directions for the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary. It was a day to examine our goals against what we actually do and consider the match between what we say we do and what we operationalize.

As we began to revisit our goal statements against our procedures, practices, and outputs, we realized some changes needed to occur in our goal statements to make them more accurately reflect our practices. Two key changes in the goal statements

were an outgrowth of the day's discussion. First, although the Center had a specific goal related to serving as a community resource, participants recognized that being a resource for a variety of stakeholders was

*"Vision without action is
merely a dream
Action without vision just
passes the time
Vision with action can
change the world"*

(Barker, 1993)

embedded throughout each goal and thus did not need to be explicated on its own. The Center serves as a resource to many individuals, agencies, and organizations through our other goals by offering graduate programs, pre-collegiate programs, curriculum materials and training, and research and evaluation results. Therefore, the consensus was to delete the community resource goal to acknowledge its place as a central emphasis within all other goals.

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From the Executive Director

Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska

We have much to be grateful for as a Center as we head into the middle of 2003. We are a major budget initiative in the new William and Mary \$5 million campaign. We have procured a large (and small) multiple year grant that will help sustain the work of the Center over the next five years, and we have been successful in gaining approval to search for a second faculty member in gifted education. Moreover, our graduate program numbers have more than doubled in the last two years while the quality of the students has remained high. Our national and international connections continue to grow and expand as school districts, state departments, and ministries learn more about our work.

★ ★ ★

I am especially proud of two key projects that were initiated and completed this past year, representing important new levels of work in the field of gifted education.

In collaboration with the Oregon Department of Education, a guide for using state standards as a basis of differentiation for gifted students was completed. It features a set of archetypal lessons developed by teachers in the state at primary, intermediate, middle school, and high school levels in each core subject area. Building from sample state

standards, teacher teams put together relevant translations of the standards for use with gifted learners. Each lesson contains activities, questions to ask, and assessment approaches to be employed. All of them feature the incorporation of accelerated or advanced learning, depth, complexity, challenge, and/or creativity – all differentiation features used as a foundation for the project. Under the direction of Dr. Laura Pehkonen and a team of subject matter consultants from the Department of Education, the project culminated in a notebook of these lesson archetypes that was distributed to all school districts, along with a videotape on how to employ the guide. Special training sessions were also held for administrators in two regions of the state.

This initiative represents an important step forward in curriculum development for advanced students by going through state standards and extending learning beyond them. It also represents an important collaboration between state curriculum consultants and local district teachers in shaping a product with content integrity while honoring the need for advanced, in-depth, complex, creative, and challenging learning opportunities which are hallmark characteristics of gifted curriculum. The development team recommended that teachers and administrators in Oregon use the guide in several ways:

- As a model for developing more differentiation examples and units of study around the content standards.
- As a basis for differentiated teaching in relevant classrooms.
- As a guide to implementing Oregon program and service requirements for addressing and documenting appropriate instructional level and rate for talented and gifted students.
- As a translation model for a given standard at the level of classroom implementation, with regular and gifted examples serving as a guide for within-class differentiation.
- As a communication tool with administrators, parents, and other stakeholders on ways to differentiate curriculum in line with the Oregon Standards.

The guide is available at cost from the Oregon Department of Education.

A second project that was also deeply gratifying involved a group of 12 dedicated teachers and administrators gathered by Dr. Michael Pyryt, director of the Center for Gifted Education at the University of Calgary, to develop Canadian versions of the William and Mary language arts units. Working with these talented individuals over the course of three days, I experienced a sense of “connectedness” to the educational

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Executive Director

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act of teaching and learning that was truly exhilarating. The teachers will now develop full units, based on the framework and sample lesson plans developed during the workshop. One school has completed a unit and is

currently piloting it in a Calgary school.

Each project represents a practical application of our work here at the Center, taking theory and research

evidence amassed over ten years and applying it to new generative projects that move the field of gifted education forward in the area of curriculum.



Strategic Planning

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Secondly, a new goal featuring professional development was added. The Center for Gifted Education offers professional development opportunities as a vehicle for developing and disseminating curriculum work, sharing research and evaluation findings, and providing networking and growth experiences for educators. We felt strongly that professional development played such a prominent role in much of the Center's work that it needed to become explicit in its emphasis as a direct goal. Professional development in K-12 schools is a major mechanism for supporting the implementation of curriculum reform efforts, state standards, and assessment. Therefore, the need to pay strong attention to this component in relation to gifted students has become paramount. Additionally, our recent Javits grant, Project Athena, has as one of its key objectives the development of a professional training module for teachers, administrators, and parents/community members.

Also discussed was the need to ensure that communication and

progress of each goal were made apparent to our stakeholders. One example of this was the reorganization of the Center's website using the goals as the mechanism for the new structure.

The new mission and goal statements follow. All of the goals are guided by the assumption that they stem from an effort to meet the needs of promising, high-ability, and gifted learners over the lifespan.

Mission Statement:

The Center for Gifted Education is a learning community that values and fosters the talent development process of individuals over the lifespan.

Center Goals:

- To provide graduate education programs and opportunities for individuals interested in teaching gifted students and/or assuming administrative and leadership positions in the field of gifted education.
- To provide selected programs and services for precollegiate learners

and their families.

- To develop, field-test, and disseminate curriculum in relevant content areas at appropriate developmental levels.
- To conduct research and evaluation for dissemination to relevant audiences and for data-based decision making.
- To provide professional development to promote leadership and exemplary practice.

The Center for Gifted Education strives to continue as an organization that responds to and provides opportunities for promising, high-ability, and gifted learners, their families, and the professionals that work with them. The staff and graduate assistants of the Center look forward to continuing our efforts toward the mission and goals of the Center over the coming years.

by Elissa F. Brown, Ph.D.

A New Book on Gifted Program Evaluation

Annie Feng, Ed.D.

A new book on contemporary issues in the evaluation of gifted programs, to be published by Prufrock Press, will soon be available to readers. Based on the Center's accumulated experience in evaluating gifted programs and empirical evidence collected over a decade, as well as major theories in the general evaluation field, this book showcases evaluation as a central tool for gifted program improvement. This book will provide researchers and practitioners with a guide for conducting both formative and summative evaluations of gifted programs at the local, state, and international level.

Co-edited by Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska and Dr. Annie Xuemei Feng at the Center for Gifted Education, the book includes 12 chapters from eight contributing writers. These chapters explore basic issues in the gifted program evaluation process, present theoretical and methodological models, and provide specific strategies on how to conduct gifted program evaluations effectively, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Topics addressed include survey construction and implementation, focus groups as a method to probe evaluation questions, assessment of classroom practices, outcome/impact data assessment, alignment with best practice standards, evaluation knowledge utilization, problems in evaluation utilization, and strategies for synthesizing evaluation findings. Two chapters are written by clients as a response to the evaluation work received. One chapter is based on another researcher's evaluation work

to present diverse perspectives and experiences.

In addition, the analysis of accumulated empirical data on gifted program evaluations over a decade will give readers a general picture of gifted program services through the lens of both stakeholders and experts in the field.

All chapters provide tables, examples, or illustrations to highlight major points, and practical tips appear at the end of each chapter. The book is written with practitioners of the field as a major audience. However, researchers in academia will also find it a useful tool for theoretical and empirical reference.

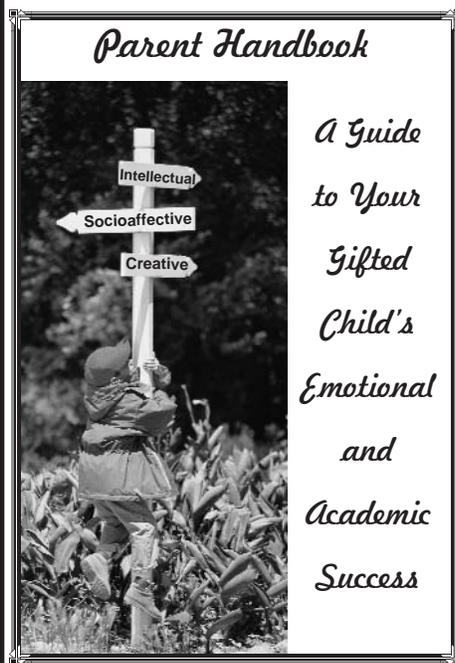


A Handbook for Parents of the Gifted

Diann Drummond

The Center for Gifted Education has compiled a new publication entitled *Parent Handbook: A Guide to Your Gifted Child's Emotional and Academic Success*. This handbook provides information and insights to help parents of gifted children guide their child from elementary school to college and beyond.

Many parents of gifted children discover early in the journey from childhood to adulthood that this path has many twists and turns for these children due to their unique characteristics and needs. The lack of a roadmap to guide parents in raising their gifted child is often a problem. There are behaviors, academic needs, and social needs particular to gifted children, and different from those of the average child, that will need attention.



Not only will parents need to pay attention to their child's unique needs, but according to the Columbus Group (Silverman, 1993), "The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching, and counseling in order for them to develop optimally." The Center for Gifted Education has been providing an enrichment program for gifted children for the past 15 years, and the staff have spent many hours talking with the parents of gifted students about the social and emotional development and academic

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Making the Conceptual Connection: The Concept Dimension of the Integrated Curriculum Model

The Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM; VanTassel-Baska, 1986, 1995) is designed to respond to gifted learners' characteristics of precocity, intensity, and complexity through its three dimensions of advanced content, higher level processes and product development, and interdisciplinary concepts, issues, and themes. This model has provided the basis for all of the Center's curriculum development work over the last 13 years, and also provided a framework for our recent text on *Content-Based Curriculum for High-Ability Learners* (VanTassel-Baska & Little, 2003).

In addition to using the ICM as the basis for Center curriculum, we have also supported educators in many school districts and graduate students in our programs at William and Mary in developing their own curriculum units using the model. Our experiences in these professional development activities and our own curriculum development projects have reinforced both the value of the model and its complexity. Based on these experiences, the "Curriculum Corner" in this issue and the next will share observations and suggestions about the integration of concept and process, respectively, that may be of some help to teachers and other curriculum developers working to employ the ICM.

The visual we use for the ICM shows three circles in a row, overlapping to

show the integration of content, process, and concept dimensions. In truth, however, the integration of the ICM is hard to demonstrate in a picture, because it is far more complex than a line drawing can represent. One aspect of this complexity is the conceptual foundation of the model. Concept study, tapping into the structures of human knowledge and the deep connections within and across disciplines, is a significant and challenging component of strong curriculum. In the ICM, it is approached through direct concept development activities as well as through activities and questions embedded in content study. Generally, although questions will probe various concepts as relevant, a given ICM unit will focus attention on a single concept as a central organizer.

Graduate students and teachers working to apply the ICM in unit development often struggle with identifying and then integrating a concept – especially when they are working to reorganize content they already teach. Some have lamented that they felt themselves to be force-fitting a concept, adding too much of this "other stuff" to satisfy the model and thus diminishing the attention given to content. In other cases, teachers writing units have tended in early drafts to address a concept through a concept development lesson, in an attempt to satisfy the

basic structure of the ICM, but then have often abandoned a centralized emphasis on the concept through the remainder of the unit. These responses – falling into more familiar patterns of planning or being stalled in the process by attempts to reconcile different patterns – are common among new users of the ICM.

Fortunately, over time, these responses are succeeded by a developing understanding of how to overcome them. One of the most fulfilling experiences in the development of any unit under the ICM is a moment when the integration of concept and content seems to "fall into place" – when the value of the concept as foundation under, umbrella over, and partner with content is realized. Sometimes this occurs when draft lessons are revisited with an eye specifically to concept integration; other times it may emerge from a conversation about the structure of the unit that allows the developer suddenly to visualize the content differently. The "moment of truth" occurs to different degrees in different circumstances, and it is stronger for some units than for others. One developer, who felt comfortable but not completely satisfied with several units she had worked on, felt a new level of accomplishment as she wrote a new unit in which the integration of content and concept not only felt natural and

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Curriculum Corner

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strong, but truly represented, for her, the differentiation that is needed for high ability learners.

Here are a few suggestions related to the process of integrating concept and content in the development of an ICM unit...

- Consider the choice of concept carefully. Examine a variety of concepts that are broad and interdisciplinary but also integral to the content area under study. Also, make sure that the concept is sufficiently abstract that it will challenge students to higher-level thinking as they develop generalizations about it.
- Read about the concept in several different sources. Explore how the concept is addressed within content standards in the discipline being studied, how it has been defined in other disciplines, and what philosophers have written about the relevance of the concept to the human experience.
- Talk to people. When we implement Taba's (1962) concept development activities in the classroom, we emphasize to students that they should share their multiple perspectives on the concept to contribute to overall group understanding; the same notion is valuable in the initial development of a unit. Conversations at the Center about the structure of systems, the elusive nature of cause and effect, the relationship between power and authority, and so forth have been challenging, rich, and critical to the development of

some of our recent units.

- Allow incubation time. Curriculum development requires intense concentration and complex integration of material from multiple sources. Often the concentration we devote to it prevents us from "seeing the forest for the trees," such that our efforts to strengthen Lesson 12 prevent us from recognizing possible strong connections between Lesson 12 and Lesson 5 and from keeping in mind Lesson 12's role in the overall unit. Putting the unit aside for a time and then revisiting it for a more holistic review can help with this problem.
- Ask for help. Often another pair of eyes can recognize opportunities for questions and activities that strengthen concept integration that we miss as developers, again because of our intense involvement and "tunnel vision" about our work. Having a colleague read over a draft unit can be helpful in promoting stronger integration. In addition, finding reviewers with extensive expertise in the discipline addressed can help to ensure that the concept integration is occurring in a way that is authentic and valid for the discipline.
- Avoid pursuing a dead end too far. Sometimes, the authentic integration of concept and content will not occur in a way that is satisfying to the developer or effective for the learner. This is less a danger if the concept initially chosen is sufficiently

broad and sound for the discipline under study; however, a persistent integration problem may be a symptom of a mismatch. If none of the above suggestions are helping, consider whether a different concept would be more effective in the context of a particular unit.

- Collaborate! Beyond just talking over the concept with others, beyond having colleagues review a draft unit, consider working in teams to develop units in the first place. This allows diversity of perspectives and ideas and can help to keep the focus more centralized as different people contribute separate parts that will require integration.
- Give it time. Good curriculum takes years to develop, and it requires multiple revisions after reviews and piloting. Nurture the evolution of a curriculum unit over time, recognizing that it will never be perfect, but that each revision can strengthen the learning opportunities the unit will provide for students.

At the Center for Gifted Education, we continually try to keep these lessons in mind as we work on our own curriculum projects, because novices and more experienced developers alike fall prey to the same obstacles in the process. We hope that these suggestions may be helpful to educators struggling to develop and implement curriculum that meets the learning needs of high-ability students.

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Curriculum Corner

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by Catherine Little, Ph.D.

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Center for Gifted Education

232 Jamestown Road

Williamsburg, VA 23185

Postal Address:

Center for Gifted Education

The College of William and Mary

P.O. Box 8795

Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795

Phone: 757-221-2362; Fax: 757-221-2184

Web Address: www.cfge.wm.edu

email address: cfge@wm.edu

Director: Dr. Elissa Brown

Systems Editors: Dr. Elissa Brown and Bess Worley

Layout/Technical Assistant: Sharron G. Gatling

Upcoming CFGE Events

SUMMER INSTITUTE ON CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMS FOR HIGH-ABILITY LEARNERS
June 23-25, 2003

SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

SESSION I - JULY 7-11, 2003

SESSION II - JULY 14-25, 2003

ADVANCED PLACEMENT INSTITUTE

August 4-8, 2003

Dissertation Abstract

A Correlation Study of School Principals' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy and the Availability and Quality of Gifted Programming in Their Schools

Louis Paul Lloyd-Zannini, Ph.D.

The purpose of this study was to determine the nature and direction of the correlation between the perceived self-efficacy of school principals and the availability and quality of the programming for gifted students in their schools.

The study asked 325 public and private elementary school principals in the Hampton Roads area of southeastern Virginia to respond to two surveys, one previously normed concerning self-efficacy, and one developed by the researcher based

on gifted program criteria established by the National Association for Gifted Children, to measure program availability and quality.

Though no statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and program availability and/or quality was found overall, such a relationship was found specifically for principals of schools whose focus was general education, and for those who served in private, non-faith/church-affiliate schools. It was found that schools serving 300 or more students were

more likely to provide gifted programming than schools serving fewer students, and that their gifted programs were more likely to be of higher quality than those in smaller schools.

Additionally, it was determined that public schools were more likely to provide gifted programming than private schools, and that, in the case of private schools, principal self-efficacy was positively related to the

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Abstract

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school's gifted program quality. Further study is needed to determine whether the findings of this study are also true for schools serving middle and high school grades, and to determine whether findings may be generalizable to other geographical areas. 📖 📖 📖

The Center for Gifted Education Goes to Denver: The National Association for Gifted Children's (NAGC) 49th Annual Convention

Bess B. Worley II

The National Association for Gifted Children's (NAGC) 49th Annual Convention, held in snowy Denver, CO, October 30 – November 3, 2002, offered the staff and graduate students of the Center for Gifted Education a variety of opportunities for professional development and interaction. Staff and graduate students of the Center presented sessions in several divisions and attended a variety of sessions.

Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska participated in five presentations, beginning with a Pre-Convention session about integrating the arts into curriculum for gifted learners. Dr. VanTassel-Baska and Dr. Catherine Little collaborated to present a special session, "Content-Based Curriculum for the Gifted: A Model for Success," which focused on the design elements of the William & Mary curriculum units for high-ability learners that align with national and state standards. Information from this presentation is included in *Content-based Curriculum for High-Ability Learners* by VanTassel-Baska & Little (Prufrock Press, 2003). Dr. VanTassel-Baska also worked with Dr. Annie Feng to

present a session on their work on the evaluation study of gifted programs in Idaho.

Dr. Elissa Brown, Director of the Center, and Dr. Little presented a session that described teaching models specifically designed to support reasoning and primary source analysis within social studies at the secondary level. This session, "Integrating Reasoning Skills in Social Studies Content," utilized models, teacher feedback, and student products generated from the use of curricular materials developed under a grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations. Dr. Brown also presented a session sharing the results of a study that examined the gifted reform policy of North Carolina. Dr. Little presented a session on one of the Center's curriculum units, *Beyond Words*, a recipient of a 2001 NAGC Curriculum Studies Division Award. This unit was designed to engage primary gifted students in learning about the structure, purpose, and beauty of metaphorical language.

Dr. Jeanne Struck presented a session, "Talent Development of African American and Low Socioeconomic

Gifted Learners," that was based on her dissertation work. Dr. Struck also participated in a special panel of researchers and practitioners who have studied ethnic diversity in gifted programs. She collaborated with Kimberley Chandler for a session discussing how to implement the William and Mary curriculum units in a variety of classroom settings.

One of the many highlights of the convention was when Kimberley Chandler received an NAGC Doctoral Student Award during the annual assembly business meeting. Kimberley, a doctoral candidate working on her dissertation and currently serving as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Virginia, also participated in several presentations.

Diann Drummond, a graduate student in the fourth year of the doctoral program, presented a session entitled "Exemplary Science Programs: What Can We Learn?" assisted by Jennifer Drummond of Evansville, IN. Diann also collaborated with Dr. Jill Burruss of the College of William and Mary

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NAGC Annual Convention

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on a presentation entitled "Giftedness and Disabilities in Students: Coincidence and Consequences."

Other graduate students also participated in presentations, such as Wenyu Bai's "Teaching Theory Building of Fundamental Issues to Gifted Children."

Several sessions were influential for graduate students in the Master's and doctoral programs. "Publishing in the Field of Gifted Education" was a panel presentation of advice from editors for submitting manuscripts to the leading journals of gifted education. Each presenter offered specific criteria regarding the publication he or she edited as well as overall advice and encouragement for publishing in the field of gifted education.

Another notable session was the Research and Evaluation Division symposium. This special session included a panel discussion by NAGC Distinguished Scholars and NAGC Early Scholars of the past 10 years. The panelists addressed several issues in the field of gifted education, including the perceived gap between practitioners and academics and the need to connect to teacher education and other national associations of education.

Sue Henson, a graduate student in the doctoral program, stated, "I thought that NAGC was a wonderful way to network with the gifted education community. . . . Perhaps the session I enjoyed most was the graduate student reception, where I met students from other

universities...and shared ideas and experiences with them. I look forward to seeing these new friends at future NAGC conferences." Heather Massey, also in the doctoral program, attended NAGC for the first time in 2002. Heather shared that she "had not realized how large the field of gifted education really [was] until attending my first NAGC." Heather also commented on the Research and Evaluation Division symposium, noting, "I was extremely impressed with the panel presentation of the

scholars. . . . The intelligence, creativity, and ingenuity possessed by that particular group of ten people is truly astonishing and inspiring."

The staff and graduate assistants of the Center thoroughly appreciated the time they spent in Denver, interacting with other professionals in the field of gifted education. We look forward to the 2003 convention in Indianapolis.



Handbook

(cont'd from page 3)

needs of their children. This year the Center staff surveyed the parents of our students to find out their most pressing questions and dilemmas. In addition, parents were asked about solutions they found that worked and examples of the "hills and valleys" of living with a gifted child. These questions, dilemmas, solutions, and examples, along with the work of the foremost authorities in gifted education, were compiled into the Parent Handbook.

Written by a parent of two gifted children, with assistance and contributions from one of those children, the handbook also provides a unique insider's view to the needs of gifted children and their parents. Most of the current books on raising gifted children were consulted and are included in a list of resources. The resource list also includes books for gifted children, books about gifted children, and Internet sites for both

parents and children, items the author would have greatly appreciated when raising her two children.

This publication is also a very useful resource for parents because of Part II, a section that includes academic activities parents can do at home with their children to extend learning into the home and community. The authors of this section are several of the authors of the award-winning William and Mary curriculum for high-ability learners. Parents can help enrich their children's learning at home with clearly-explained strategies to teach writing, reasoning, researching, and the understanding of concepts and literature.

The Parent Handbook seeks to provide a basis for understanding giftedness and its resulting behaviors, and refers parents to other resources dealing with specific issues. To order, call (757) 221-2362. 

Families Enjoy Seventh Annual Focusing on the Future Career Conference

Suzanna Henshon

Over 500 parents and students registered for the Seventh Annual Focusing on the Future Career Conference held at The College of William and Mary on Saturday, January 18, 2003. The purpose of this annual career conference is to expose high-ability learners to career opportunities related to the arts, humanities, mathematics, and sciences. Parents also have the opportunity to attend sessions about how to assist their children with academic, college, and career planning.

Participants this year were welcomed to the day-long conference by Dr. Elissa Brown, Director of the Center for Gifted Education. In her opening address, Dr. Brown explained the purpose of the day's activities and provided an overview of the Center for Gifted Education's mission statement and continued service to the community. At the conclusion of the opening remarks, the coordinator of the conference, Suzanna Henshon, also welcomed the audience and presented them with an overview of the day's events.

Dr. Brown introduced the opening panel, including Dr. Norma Day-Vines from the School of Education and Professor Alan Meese from the Marshall-Wythe School of Law at The College of William & Mary. Dr. Brown asked the panel members how they had become interested in their respective careers, obstacles they experienced along the way, how their career paths may have changed, and



Focusing on the Future Participants

Parents commented that the day had been "well worth the time, travel, and effort of attending."

what advice they would give to young people as they plan their career paths.

Professor Norma Day-Vines indicated she was always interested in working with people, so being a school counselor was a perfect career match. Several years into her career, however, she realized that she wanted both the academic challenge of research and the ability to impact the lives of young people. As an academic, she is able to help train school counselors while at the same time developing new strategies for working with schoolchildren. As a Professor at the School of Education, she enjoys the intellectual rigor of research as well as the teaching component of her job. Over the course of her career, she has seen

schools become more responsive to the academic and personal/social needs of students. Dr. Day-Vines stated that counselors will need special skills in dealing with students from culturally diverse backgrounds, and that counselors who have the ability to speak more than one language will be in great demand.

Professor Alan Meese commented that he always wanted to be a lawyer because he likes being able to interpret documents and solve problems. As an antitrust specialist at the Marshall-Wythe School of Law, he enjoys being able to combine his interests in public policy, economic theories, and the law while training future lawyers. Rather than specializing early, Professor Meese recommended that students keep their options open and take advantage of "shadowing" opportunities that allow them to gain insights into a career while following in the footsteps of a professional. He recommended that students explore the educational landscape before specializing. In the future, Professor

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Focusing on the Future Career Conference

(cont'd from page 10)

Meese expects that more law professors will pursue Ph.D. degrees. Additionally, more law firms will be international in scope, with branches all around the world.

Following the opening session, students and parents attended one morning and two afternoon workshops. Students chose from 30 different vocational interest areas, including Paleontology/Geology, Counseling, Dance, Education, Anthropology, Medicine, Theater, Business, Engineering, Marine Science, Instrumental Music, Computer Science, Law, Business, Art, Mass Communications, and International Studies. Each workshop session was led by either a William and Mary faculty member or a practicing professional in the field. Many of the workshops included hands-on activities, in which students were not only exposed to background information about the subject but also worked on a real life problem. Presenters also shared how they chose their career, the academic planning required for careers in their field, and the myriad of career opportunities available in their field.

While students attended workshops with experts in a variety of fields, their parents chose from workshops on Considerations in Career Planning, Financial Planning for Parents of Middle School and High School Students, Planning for College, Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Students, and Supporting Interest in Math and Science. At these sessions, parents were able to ask questions

about a variety of subjects, including how to help their children prepare for the SAT, how to help them adjust to college life, and how to help their child choose a rewarding career. One parent commented, "This is a wonderful and informative program! We truly appreciate your efforts."

During lunch, students and parents were able to listen to current William and Mary students address issues of college life. Student panel members shared their experiences of choosing a college, deciding on a major, adjusting to college life, and planning for future careers. One student panelist commented, "When I came to look at William and Mary, I was amazed at how dedicated students were to their studies. I was looking for a campus where I could find intellectual stimulation and camaraderie between students and professors, and I found that here." Conference participants appreciated this unique opportunity to hear about the College from the perspective of current students. Many participants enjoyed having their specific questions about college life answered.

After the final session, several groups of parents and students ended the day with a tour of the historic William and Mary campus, led by current college students. Others chose to attend an informational session in which several of the student panelists answered more questions about college life and William and Mary. Participant evaluations indicated that the conference was a resounding success. Students commented that

the sessions had been "informative, exciting, and interesting." Parents commented that the day had been "well worth the time, travel, and effort of attending." One family commented that "It was a wonderful experience. We hope to come back next year." With more families enjoying the career conference each year, the Center for Gifted Education looks forward to sponsoring the Eighth Annual Focusing on the Future Conference during the 2003-2004 academic year.



Mark Your Calendar

Summer Institute on Curriculum and Programs for High-Ability Learners

June 23-25, 2003

The Summer Institute focuses on curriculum and programs for high-ability learners. The institute is designed to provide educators with the knowledge and skills to design and utilize high quality curriculum within effective programs for advanced learners.

Strands

The Center for Gifted Education Language Arts Curriculum
Problem-Based Learning & the Center for Gifted Education Science Curriculum
The Center for Gifted Education Social Studies Curriculum
Mathematics Curriculum and Instruction for High Ability Learners
Designing and Maintaining an Exemplary Gifted Program

Further details are available at www.cfge.wm.edu or by contacting (757) 221-2362 or cfge@wm.edu.



Center for Gifted Education
The College of William and Mary
P.O. Box 8795
Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795

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