
College of William & Mary, Center for Gifted Education Spring 2012

## From the Executive Director

Working with my colleagues at the Center for Gifted Education has been quite an honor. The Directors at the Center (Drs. Lori Bland, Kim Chandler, Jennifer Cross, Miyheon Kim) are a very capable group with considerable expertise. I am happy to report that in addition to their director titles, The College of William and Mary has deemed it appropriate to offer each of them faculty status. This is an acknowledgement of their contributions and training. One advantage of this change is that our doctoral students now have four additional potential chairs and members of their dissertation committees. Congratulations to each of the directors.

A second very exciting event since the last newsletter is the recent funding of a summer residential camp for rising seventh grade high ability students from financially impoverished backgrounds. We are partnering with the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to create this opportunity to improve the lives of these students by providing an intensive training for two weeks, with year-round interactions. The same group of 55 students from the first year will return for a second year along with a new group of students, bringing our total number of campers to 100 or so. This grant was written as a collaborative effort of all the directors. The program has been titled *Camp Launch,* as it has been designed to prepare these students for the future.

I am happy to report that the Center has a new scholarship in honor of Dawn Benson, a long-term employee who was often described as the heart and soul of the Center. The scholarship was created by Dawn's parents to support academically distinguished graduate students enrolled in the Gifted Education program at the School of Education. Preference will be given to students with international experiences and/or backgrounds. If you would like to contribute to the Dawn Benson scholarship please email our office manager Laura Ionescu or contact her by phone at 757.221.2362.

Another new addition in our Center is the recent partnership with the faculty in the William & Mary School of Education School Psychology Program. Together, we have been offering psychoeducational assessments for a few months now, with fees for services on a sliding scale. Dr. Lea Theodore has done a masterful job coordinating the assessments. Laura Ionescu (Center Office Manager) is the point of contact and makes the arrangements for the assessments.

It has often been said that it takes about three years in a new role to fully grow into it. That seems fair in my case as well. Following Joyce at the Center, while daunting, could not have been a better experience for me. Our Dean is supportive of the Center and the future seems quite bright.

Please visit our website for additional details about the Center's activities. Should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact us.

**Tracy L. Cross**
**Executive Director, Center for Gifted Education**
**Jody and Layton Smith Professor of Psychology and Gifted Education**

## Center for Gifted Education to Celebrate 25 Years!

The 2013 – 2014 academic year will mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Center for Gifted Education (CFGE) at The College of William and Mary by Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska. In preparation for the celebration and starting with this issue, we will share pictures, reprints of articles, and reflections about the evolution of the CFGE. In this issue, you will find a reprint of an interview with founder VanTassel-Baska and some pictures from the Center's past.

If you have pictures, anecdotes, or other information you would like to share, please contact Dr. Kimberley Chandler at klchan@wm.edu. She is spearheading the 25th anniversary celebration committee and would appreciate your contributions.

## In Press Curriculum January, 2012

**Dr. Kimberley L. Chandler, Curriculum Director**

The "Curriculum Corner" is a blog in which I provide tips and resources for implementing the William and Mary curriculum materials and differentiating instruction for highly able students. You can locate the blog at: http://curriculumcorner.blogs.wm.edu/

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Many new curriculum materials are in production at the Center for Gifted Education! I would like to spotlight items that will be available in 2012 – 2014. Because these items are still in production, please note that titles are subject to change.

Six new *Navigators* will be self-published by the CFGE:

- *One Green Apple - Eve Bunting*
- *The Memory String - Eve Bunting*
- *Esperanza Rising - Pam Muñoz Ryan*
- *Riding Freedom - Pam Muñoz Ryan*
- *The Year of Miss Agnes - Kirkpatrick Hill*
- *The School Story - Andrew Clements*

Two new mathematics units will be published by Prufrock Press:

- *Splash! Everyone into the Pool!* is a unit for high-ability learners in kindergarten and first grade focusing on mathematical concepts related to linear measurement, the creativity elements of fluency and flexibility, and the overarching, interdisciplinary concept of models. The unit consists of thirteen lessons centered around the idea of designing a community pool. Students examine the question of why we measure, the importance of accuracy in measurement, and the various units and tools of measurement. The unit presents a hands-on, constructivist approach, allowing children to build their knowledge base and their skills as they explore mathematical ideas through play and planned investigations. Students are involved in creative and critical thinking, problem solving, process skill development, and communication opportunities.

- *Polygons Galore!* is a unit for high-ability learners in grades 3 to 5 focusing on two-dimensional and three-dimensional components of geometry by exploring polygons and polyhedra and their properties. The van Hiele levels of geometric understanding provide conceptual underpinnings for unit activities. The unit consists of nine lessons that include student discovery of properties of polygons and polyhedra, investigations for finding areas of triangles and quadrilaterals, study of the Platonic solids, and real-world applications of polygons and polyhedra. Geometry is a fundamental and powerful strand of mathematics that is the foundation for spatial reasoning. This unit includes activities related to: identifying, comparing, and analyzing polygons by using properties of the polygons; constructing meanings for geometric terms;

developing strategies to find areas of specific polygons; identifying and building regular and non-regular polyhedra; and recognizing geometric ideas and relationships as applied in daily life and in other disciplines, such as art.

An elementary science unit, modeled after the Project Clarion units, is in production and will be published by Prufrock Press:

- *The Earth Beneath Our Feet* is a science unit designed to be used with high ability third or fourth graders. Children are fascinated with soil. They enjoy digging in the ground and take pleasure from finding things like worms, insects, fossils, and rocks within the soil. This unit builds on students' excitement about soil through hands-on scientific investigations that help them make connections between the processes of weathering and erosion, rocks, soil, and the concept of change.
  The unit content expands on knowledge that students will develop in early earth science investigations. This unit emphasizes the action of weathering and erosion in the creation of soil, the negative effects of erosion on land, and provides students opportunities to explore methods that reduce the impact of erosion. Students participate in a variety of activities in which they discover the impact of natural and man-made processes on the weathering and erosion of rocks and soil and how this relates to the concept of change.

Six humanities units for students in grades 6 to 8 are being developed and will be published by Prufrock Press: (I need teachers to pilot these units. Please see my contact information below if you are interested.)

- These humanities units focus on the way in which the literature, art, and music of each decade reflect the history and events that were occurring in America at that time. These units are intended to stimulate student interest and creativity, to develop higher order thinking skills, and to promote interdisciplinary learning. The units may be used to supplement a social studies curriculum or a language arts curriculum, or could be used as stand-alone materials in a gifted education program.
  The working titles for the units are:
  - 1950s: *Beneath the Formica: Conformity in the 1950s*
  - 1960s: *Our Voices Will be Heard: The Movements of the 1960s*
  - 1970s: *Taking Time Out for Me: Celebrating the Self in the 1970s*
  - 1980s: *Climbing the Corporate Ladder and Tearing Down Walls in the 1980s*
  - 1990s: *Speeding onto the Information Superhighway: The Explosion of New Identities in the 1990s*
  - 2000s: *Searching for Control: Creating an Identity in the Post-9/11 World*

A teacher resource book will be published by Prufrock Press:

*Assessments for Highly Able Students* includes sample curriculum-based assessments for use with highly able students. The assessments are compiled from the award-winning curriculum units developed

at the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary. These assessments are taken from each content area and are illustrative of methods for assessing student performance in the gifted education classroom.

Four new language arts units are in development. Information about them will be available in the next issue of *The Bridge*. Thank you for your continued interest in our curriculum materials! For additional information, you may reach me at 757-221-2588, or at klchan@wm.edu.

## Book Description:

## *Practical Solutions for Underserved Gifted Students: Effective Curriculum for Underserved Populations*

**By Tamra Stambaugh and Kimberley L. Chandler**

This is a publication of Prufrock Press and is part of the *CEC-TAG Educational Resource Series*. In this article, co-author Kimberley Chandler gives a brief overview.

*Note: Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners are defined as any learners who may be underserved in a gifted program. Although the term CLD learners may have different meanings in different contexts, it is applied in this book as an all-encompassing term that includes any student whose culture and/or language is different from that of the majority culture in his or her school. Culture describes the values and practices of a given society or group, the culture of poverty, or the culture of an ethnic group in the United States. CLD learners comprise a large group of students who, although very different, also share some common characteristics. However, they differ in these characteristics just as much as they are alike. Additionally, CLD populations may demonstrate these characteristics in different ways from the dominant culture, sometimes in such a way that these characteristics may be perceived as negative. Some common characteristics include: high verbal ability in the native language, strong storytelling ability in the native language, strong critical thinking skills in the primary language, long attention span and ability to concentrate intensely, humor displayed through a unique use of language, and richness of imagery in ideas (New Mexico State Department of Education, 1994).* (Excerpt used with permission from Prufrock Press, Inc.)

The purpose of this book is to describe the curriculum interventions found to be effective with gifted students typically underrepresented in gifted programs (including children of poverty and those who are from culturally and linguistically diverse populations) in order to delineate common features. Emanating from research conducted through the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program in particular, data exist that provide evidence of effective curriculum interventions for working with CLD students. In an earlier publication, Stambaugh (2009) reviewed this research and other curriculum studies and found that seven studies met specific criteria related to curriculum efficacy for CLD learners: Mentoring Mathematical Minds

(M3); Project Athena Language Arts Study; The Jacob's Ladder Reading Comprehension Program; Project Clarion Science Scale-Up Study; Schoolwide Enrichment Model-Reading (SEM-R); Project Breakthrough; and Project U-STARS Plus.

When Stambaugh described and compared these studies, she determined that there were eight common curriculum features that can be implemented by teachers in general or gifted education classrooms:

- Use graphic organizers to scaffold the teaching of thinking skills.
- Focus on developing potential rather than remediating weaknesses.
- Model the oral and written communication of a discipline.
- Participate in professional development specifically related to the needs of CLD learners.
- Include real-world problem solving and student choice in order to engage students.
- Have students participate in goal-setting and self-monitoring relative to their work.
- Use curriculum-based performance assessments to measure student growth.
- Use curriculum that has been proven to be efficacious with these learners. Take advantage of training opportunities to ensure fidelity of implementation.

Based on the research, we included a model that incorporates these features of curriculum design and delivery for promoting the achievement of students from underserved gifted populations. We then provided a list of evidence-based recommendations for use by various stakeholders to optimize educational opportunities and talent development for CLD learners.

# Precollegiate Programs

**by Mihyeon Kim, Ph.D, Ed.D**

***Saturday/Summer Enrichment Program (SEP).*** Our Saturday and Summer Enrichment Programs (SEP) provide academically challenging courses for students in K-9th grade. Through this program the Center for Gifted Education hopes to inspire students to become self-directed learners with a passion for exploring the world around them. In addition, we seek to establish network among parents to assist in helping gifted students achieve success. A week at SEP not only ignites the student's curiosity, but also provides them with peer relationships and an experience they will never forget. As always, two sessions of Summer SEP are offered. Session I runs from July 9th-13th and Session II runs from July 16th-20th, 2012. Registration for Summer SEP will be available mid-March.

***Expanding our Enrichment Programs.*** This summer the Center for Gifted Education is pleased to offer courses in Richmond, Virginia for the second year in a row. As with the long standing Summer SEP program offered on the William and Mary Campus, students who attend SEP in Richmond will have extraordinary

experiences, both academic and social. The sessions, with courses for middle school students, will be held daily from June 25th-28th, 2012 at Maggie Walker Governor's School. There is also a program operating on Saturdays during the fall at St. Mary's Catholic School that will serve students in the 1st -3rd grades. All of these programs will provide the high-quality classroom experiences that have been a hallmark of our enrichment programs for years. Brochures for all of our SEP programs will be made available on our website in March. For more information, please visit the Precollegiate Learner Programs section of the CFGE website.

***Camp Launch.*** This year the Center for Gifted Education is proud to conduct its first residential summer program for high ability, low-income students. Born out of a desire to help gifted students from all socioeconomic levels, Camp Launch will provide 55 high ability, low-income students with enrichment opportunities and the ability to reach their potential. These students will participate in a two-week residential program during which they will take courses in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), writing and personal development. Not only will these students experience a rigorous academic environment, they will also build community and be introduced to the academic and career possibilities that their futures hold. Camp Launch will run from July 15th-28th, 2012. The camp is being funded by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and is an effort towards achieving the Center for Gifted Education's goal of serving all gifted students.

***Focusing on the Future***. The Center for Gifted education strives to assist gifted students in seeking out opportunities for their futures. Each year we offer our annual Focusing on the Future career conference, which provides participants with academic enhancement strategies and opportunities for college/career exploration. This year's event took place on January , in The College of William and Mary School of Education's Professional Development Center, with over 250 parents and students attending. Focusing on the Future is an all-day career conference for students in grades 6-12, parents, and school counselors. While at the conference, students have the opportunity to attend sessions headed by professionals in their fields of interest. Students are introduced to adults with real world experience who provide them with invaluable information regarding how to succeed in the field, the type of preparation needed, and what career opportunities are available. Parents and counselors also have the opportunity to participate in workshops regarding practical issues such as financial planning for college, and theoretical issues such as emotional characteristics of gifted children. Focusing on the Future is a great way for students to explore career options and to help parents, counselors and students take steps toward planning for their futures. We hope you will join us for next year's Focusing event, which will take place on January 26, 2013.

## Thinking Styles and Career Choices

**By Mihyeon Kim**

Conventional psychometric intelligence tests have been challenged as predictors of students' academic success and real-world performance (Sternberg, Wagner, Williams, & Horvath, 1995). To explain students' successful school and real-world performance, Sternberg (1994) emphasized individual differences and styles of

thinking more than different types of abilities. He believed that intellectual abilities could not be understood without knowing how individuals reacted to environmental situations. In accord with this belief, he developed the mental self-governing theory (1997), which hypothesized that people govern their daily activities with different strategies. He called these different strategies "thinking styles."

Thinking style is the preference for representation and processing of information in the mind, which is the consistent way of interacting with the environment and adapting to new information. Preferences shape expressive behaviors and styles. The basic idea of Sternberg's (1997) mental self-government theory is that people need to govern their minds, and these governing activities need to be responsive to environmental changes, just as a government needs to be responsive to changes in our society. Sternberg proposed 13 thinking styles within five dimensions of mental self-government: functions (legislative, executive, and judicial thinking styles), forms (hierarchical, oligarchic, monarchic, anarchic thinking styles), levels (global and local thinking styles), scopes (including internal and external thinking styles), and leanings (liberal and conservative thinking styles). Table 1 provides a summary of these defined styles.

Sternberg (1997) stressed individual differences and addressed the point that style research should provide a basis for matching students' styles with educational approaches. This would allow students to identify proper career paths based on their preferences, and to experience appropriate career development toward their identified career paths. Therefore, the purpose of various thinking style research is to promote learning based on individual differences and to achieve better performance in schools, as well as in the work setting, by maximizing individuals' potential abilities (Cano-Garcia & Hughes, 2000).

The current study examined individual style differences in thinking among high-achieving students within two different high-school service-delivery models: the IB program and Governor's School Program. These models are for high-achieving students. Because giftedness does not necessarily produce high performance (Kingore, 2005), this study considers high-achieving students as those who have been selected through an IB program or Governor's School Program admission process. Even though both programs are designed for high-achieving students, a Governors' School Program and an IB program have different academic foci, and different academic foci might demonstrate students' differences in thinking styles. The following research questions focus on seeking answers to two primary inquiries associated with the thinking style differences of high-achieving students.

1. How are thinking styles related to choice of desired career?
2. How are thinking-style preferences of high-achieving students attending a Governor's School Program in science and technology different from those of the high-achieving students participating in International Baccalaureate (IB) programs with a focus on the liberal arts?

Table 1

*Summary of Styles of Mental Self-Government Theory*

| Style | Characterization |
|---|---|
| FUNCTIONS | |
| Legislative | Like to create and do new things, and prefer less pre-structured problems |
| Executive | Like to follow disciplines, and prefer to be in the existing structure |
| Judicial | Like to judge and evaluate people and things |
| FORMS | |
| Monarchic | Like to do one thing at a time with devotion regardless of the situation |
| Hierarchic | Like to do many things at once through setting priorities for work |
| Oligarchic | Like to do many things at once without setting priorities |
| Anarchic | Like to take a random approach to problems, and to put together diverse bits of information and ideas in a creative way |
| LEVELS | |
| Global | Like to deal with a big abstract picture rather than focusing on details |
| Local | Like to deal with details and concrete examples rather than looking at abstract big goals |
| SCOPE | |
| Internal | Like to work alone and tend to be introverted |
| External | Like to work with others, and be sociable |
| LEANING | |
| Liberal | Like to do things in new ways and deny tradition |
| Conservative | Like to do things in traditional way |

**Research Findings**

A total of 209 responses out of 283 (74%) were received from students who were selected through admission process of an IB program or Governor's School program in an East Coast city. Out of 209 participants, 95 students (45%) were attending IB programs, and 114 students (55%) were attending a Governor's School. With regard to gender, 104 students were male and 105 students were female. The students' age range was 15 to 18 years, and the average age was 16.8 years. To address Research Question 1, logistic regression analyses were used to determine which thinking styles would best predict students' desired career choices, and allowed the researcher to assess a model's ability to predict students' desired careers with different

thinking styles (Field, 2009; McCoach & Siegle, 2003). Based on the results of logistic regression analysis, thinking styles were good predictors for whether students choose social science or computers and math areas as their desired career. The results of the current study showed that those students with a liberal or an external thinking style chose the social science area for their future careers. High school students who were people-oriented, outgoing, and socially sensitive preferred the social science area for their future careers. In addition, the results showed that high-achieving high school students with an external thinking style did not prefer computer and math areas for their future careers.

To address Research Question 2, MANOVA was conducted to compare the means of students in the two programs for the different thinking styles. Students in the IB programs scored higher in hierarchic, external, and judicial thinking styles; whereas students in the Governor's Program scored higher in the liberal/progressive and legislative/self-reliant thinking style. High school students attending a program with an academic focus on liberal arts tended to be more people-oriented, outgoing, and valued sharing ideas with others as opposed to students in a program with an academic focus on science and technology. In addition, students attending a program with an academic focus on liberal arts tended to be more systematic and set priorities as compared to students attending a program with an academic focus on science and technology.

**Conclusions**

The current study set out to explore how thinking styles are related to career decision-making and different programs among high-achieving students. The data show that thinking styles are a factor in students' career decision-making. In addition, thinking styles are different among students enrolled in different programs. If students' thinking styles are different, counselors, teachers, and parents should recognize these differences as factors in students' optimal career choices. The leaders in designing advanced high-school programs may choose to recruit students who fit each of the advanced programs, depending on their academic focus. In addition, schools can provide various assessments, including thinking style assessment, to identify students' preferences and talents, to maximize their abilities, and to prepare them for their future careers. Because academic and career advising play an important role in students' career decisions, counselors may want to consider individual styles as they attempt to find a match between students' characteristics and future career goals.

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# Professional Development

## The College of William and Mary, Center for Gifted Education Hosts the Korean Nobel Project Recipients

**By Paige Hendricks**

The College of William and Mary, Center for Gifted Education hosted 34 visitors from Korea on January 5-11, 2012. Administrators, educators, and students from Korea came to Williamsburg, Virginia to exchange ideas about teaching and learning through a variety of scientific and mathematic curricular concepts. This visit to the United States was part of the Korean Nobel Project, a project helping to stimulate the minds and develop the skills of Korea's future global leaders.

Visiting students went through a rigorous selection process to participate in the Nobel Project of Korea. The top 0.01% of all students from the Chungcheongnamdo Province were selected to participate in the visit to The College of William and Mary. In addition, the teachers and administrators who also participated have built successful mentor relationships with these students over time.

The Korean students engaged in authentic learning experiences through high-level and interactive mathematical and scientific curriculum. The students learned about spatial reasoning, fractals, genetics, force and acceleration, and the chemistry behind crime scene investigation (CSI) in conjunction with The William and Mary gifted education curricular and instructional models. The teachers received professional development on best practices to teach high-ability and gifted students using The William and Mary teaching and learning modules. The Korean teachers learned and practiced multiple teaching strategies that combine high-level content with problem-based learning and the development of conceptual understanding.

These topics were presented in conjunction with William and Mary curricular units of study and the Integrated Curriculum Model. Teaching and learning took place at the new School of Education building on the William and Mary campus as well as the science and computer laboratories of Small and Millington Halls. The groups also interacted with classes of students and teachers at Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for

Government and International Studies in Richmond, Virginia for an entire day. Finally, the Korean visitors toured Jamestown Settlement, downtown Richmond, and Colonial Williamsburg and became part of the rich history that Virginia has to offer.

## National Curriculum Network Conference (NCNC)

**By Paige Hendricks**

On March 8th and 9th, 2012, the Center for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary will host the 17th annual National Curriculum Network Conference with the theme of "Supporting Gifted Learners from Potential to Success." This year boasts an exciting variety of sessions, seminars, and conversations surrounding the "hot topic" of talent development and what it means for the evolution of the field of gifted education. We hope you will join us and be a thought leader in the discussion. Dr. Paula Olszewski-Kubilius from Northwestern University will present her recent presidential speech from NAGC in which she proposes a move in the field towards a talent development model. A panel including Dr. Rena Subotnik, Dr. James Gallagher, Dr. Larry Coleman, and Dr. Linda Brody will explore this potential new direction with Paula as an opening conference event.

You won't want to miss the session where Dr. Subotnik and Dr. Olszewski-Kubilius will discuss their latest publication "Rethinking Giftedness and Gifted Education: A Proposed Direction Forward Based on Psychological Science" (2011) with a panel of practitioners. Your thoughts, concerns, and potential challenges are welcome in this group discussion. Friday, March 9th, will include our usual practitioner-oriented presentations on a variety of topics in the field, such as the Common Core Standards and gifted education, our W & M curricula practices, and networking seminars and group discussions. Participants will have the unique opportunity to engage in dialogue with some of the great minds in our field. This is also the time to network with colleagues and professionals, blending theory with practical knowledge.

The 2012 Conference will be the venue for creative thinking and open discussions about gifted education. To register and for more information, see our website at: cfge.wm.edu/professional_ncnc. See you in March, 2012!

## Professional Summer Institute

**By Paige Hendricks**

The Center for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary is offering a Summer Institute focused on curriculum, instruction, and assessment for high-ability learners on June 21-22, 2012. We invite gifted program coordinators, other district and building-level administrators, teachers of the gifted, and all teachers to attend this special event! If you want to enhance your ability to differentiate appropriately for their high-ability learners, don't miss this year's Summer Institute! During the Summer Institute, the Center for

Gifted Education materials will be highlighted as models of best practices in research-based curriculum in the field of gifted education.

Institute participants will choose one of multiple sessions that relate to the framework and models used in the William and Mary curricular units. These units are nationally acclaimed and draw on existing research and evidence of effective practices in gifted education. Elements that permeate all sessions of the Institute are:

- Promoting standards of excellence.
- Integrating 21st Century skills into curriculum, instruction, and assessment, including problem solving, critical thinking and reasoning, creative thinking, metacognition, and content-based thinking and process skills.
- Utilizing interdisciplinary concepts.
- Integrating high level content applications (activities and questions).
- Utilizing models to measure gifted students growth that reflects their aptitudes and achievement levels.

For more information and to register for this event, please see our website at: cfge.wm.edu/professional_si. We welcome you to Williamsburg, Virginia for a summer of learning and fun!

## Pre-AP and AP Summer Institutes

**By Paige Hendricks**

Calling all Pre-AP and AP teachers! The College of William and Mary is offering Pre-AP and AP Summer Institutes for you to attend! These institutes will provide a unique professional development opportunity for future and new teachers of AP courses. Hundreds of AP teachers from around the country come together for five days to hone their teaching techniques and skills, update their content area knowledge, and learn from experts and other teachers from across the country.

The Pre-AP Institute (July 23-July 26, 2012) will offer resources and services designed to equip all middle and high school teachers with the strategies and tools they need to engage their students in active, high-level learning, thereby ensuring that every middle and high school student develops the skills, habits of mind, and concepts they need to succeed in college. The courses offered are: English, History and Social Sciences, Mathematics, Science, and World Languages and Cultures.

The AP Institute (July 30-August 3, 2012) is designed to help new and beginning teachers plan and implement more effective AP programs in their schools. Teachers who have no experience or who have 1-3 years of experience can benefit from a variety of courses including: Biology, Calculus AB, Chemistry, English Literature and Composition, English Language and Composition, Spanish, French, Macro Economics, Psychology, Statistics, Physics B&C, U.S. Government & Politics, U.S. History, European History, and World History. New exams in World History, Biology, and French for 2012 will be discussed at the AP Institute.

At the Pre-AP and AP Summer Institutes, teachers will be able to deepen their knowledge of AP subject content while learning about effective teaching strategies from CollegeBoard® certified consultants who are

master teachers. These institutes allow participants to collaborate with others who are teaching the same courses at different schools from across the country. Don't miss the opportunity to become certified, increase your knowledge of AP subject areas, and network with other teachers in your field. The College of William and Mary is a certified CollegeBoard® institution. For additional information, see our website at www.cfge.edu.

***Paige Hendricks*** *is a doctoral student at The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA. Her concentration is in Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership (EPPL), gifted administration and higher education. Paige is also a full-time graduate assistant at the Center for Gifted Education, specializing in professional development, program evaluation, and conference planning.*

# Research

## Support for Gifted Education Among Gifted Students

**by Jennifer Riedl Cross, Ph.D.**
**CFGE Director of Research**

Gifted students should be in the best position to recognize the need for gifted education. After all, they are the ones who suffer most when schools neglect their abilities. You might think that gifted students would be the most supportive of special services to meet their unique needs, but that is not always the case.

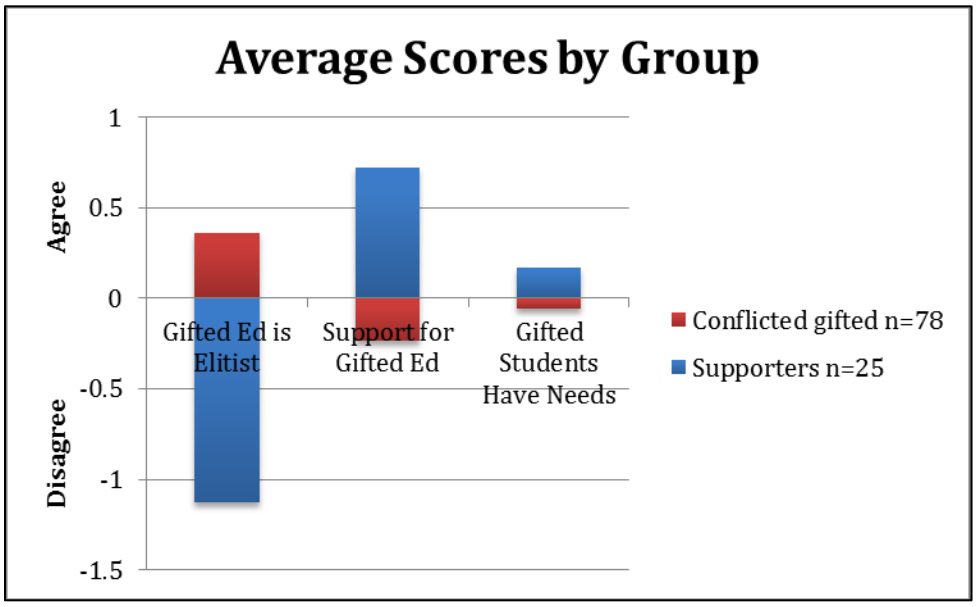
We surveyed 11th and 12th grade students (*N*=103) in a residential school for gifted students about their attitudes toward gifted education. The students' responses to the survey fell into two groups and these groups did not differ in how they felt about the *needs* that gifted students have. Both groups mostly agreed with statements like, "The regular school program stifles the intellectual curiosity of gifted children" and "Often, gifted children are rejected because people are envious of them" and "The gifted waste their time in regular classes." But when it came to questions about *elitism*, such as "Special programs for gifted children have the drawback of creating elitism" and "When the gifted are put in special classes, the other children feel devalued," a majority of the students (n=78) agreed. A much smaller group (n=25) strongly disagreed with these statements, indicating they do not believe gifted education is elitist.

These beliefs have implications for students' *support* of gifted education and, as you might expect, the students who believed gifted education is elitist – 76% of our sample – responded mostly negatively to statements such as, "Gifted persons are a valuable resource for our society" and "Our schools should offer special education services for the gifted." Figure 1 shows the average scores for agreement or disagreement with elitism, support, and needs statements of the two different groups

These students were fortunate to be in a school that provided for their academic and social needs as outstanding achievers, but they had years of education that helped to shape their beliefs prior to coming to the residential school for gifted students. That a majority of gifted students, even while recognizing their unique needs in school, have strong negative attitudes toward gifted education, should serve as a wake-up call to

advocates. What is happening in gifted education that encourages students, even those who likely were in gifted programs, to believe that it is elitist? This is an extremely important question for our field. We know that gifted students have special needs. How can we provide for them without alienating them from peers? What is it about gifted education that makes these students perceive it as elitist? We must be sure we do not have blinders on when we ask this question. These students have direct experience in the trenches and a significant majority of them believe that gifted education is elitist. Should we spend time trying to change their minds or should we be considering ways to change gifted education to improve its image?

Figure 1. Residential school gifted students' attitudes toward gifted education.

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## Call for Research Participation-Adolescent Crowd Study

Anyone who has worked in (or attended) a secondary school has seen evidence of adolescent crowds. Maybe in your school, the jock crowd hung out in the front hall and the rebel crowd – the druggies, toughs, or trouble-makers – hung out behind the gym. The band kids were usually down by the bandroom and the academic crowd was kind of invisible. These adolescent crowds go by different names and have different status in different schools, but almost any study of secondary schools finds at least five crowd types: *Popular, Athletic, Deviant, Academic*, and *Other* (Sussman, Pokhrel, Ashmore, & Brown, 2009). Membership in these crowds is not always clear, and new research suggests that students often consider themselves members of multiple crowds (Cross, 2012; Cross & Fletcher, 2011). Crowds channel adolescent activities (Brown, Mory, & Kinney, 1994) and help to shape their identity (Eckert, 1989). In studying the social and emotional lives of gifted students, it is important that we learn more about their relationship with these crowds. A student's willingness to be identified as a member of the Academic crowd may be important to her or his fulfillment of academic potential.

In a study designed to learn what factors are associated with a willingness or unwillingness to be identified as a member of the "Smart" crowd, we hope to learn more about the relationship between individual characteristics, students' perceptions of the school and social setting, and crowd membership. This study will allow us to draw a picture of the student body through their attitudes. It includes instruments designed to assess student perceptions of the school climate (trust in teachers and administration, academic "press" or rigor in the school, identification with the school), student self-concept, attitudes toward intergroup relations, a bullying/victimization instrument, and crowd membership. In addition to fulfilling our research needs, the school will benefit from participation, as well. We will provide a report to the school, along with a presentation of our findings about students' perceptions, about school climate and social structure that will be useful to administrators, teachers and counselors.

In the first phase of the study, researchers will conduct a lecture to a required class at each grade level, during which we will learn about the names of the crowds in the school. The crowd names will be put into the survey, which can then be administered to the students either online or by pencil and paper, depending on the school's facilities. This novel approach to studying the social structure of the school along with individual beliefs has the potential to greatly expand what is known not only about gifted students, but about the adolescent social experience in general.

It can be challenging to find the time to do research in a busy academic environment, but generations of future students and educators can gain from the knowledge that is derived from one survey. We hope you will consider participating in this study for the benefit of future students. All research plans will be submitted to The College of William & Mary's Institutional Review Board and the participating school district's research approval process. **Please contact Jennifer Riedl Cross, CFGE Director of Research, jrcross@wm.edu, for more information.**

## Psychoeducational Assessments now available through William & Mary

**By Dr. Lea Theodore**

The Assessment Clinic at The College of William and Mary School of Education is a collaborative effort between the Center for Gifted Education and the School Psychology Program. The Assessment Clinic conducts independent evaluations to determine the ability and achievement profiles of gifted and talented students in grades K-12. The assessment typically includes clinical interviews with students and parents, observation of the student, psychological/educational testing, and behavior rating scales. Assessments will include multiple measures, approaches, and sources of information. Upon completion of the assessment, a feedback session is scheduled to review results, discuss the interpretation of findings. A comprehensive report is also provided to the family.

The Assessment Clinic is designed to provide practical experiences in psychoeducational assessment for school psychologists-in-training. Advanced Master's level and Educational Specialist level graduate students will conduct the assessments under the direct supervision of the School Psychology Program faculty (Drs. Hardinge, Lavach, Theodore, Ward) as part of practicum courses and experiences. All services are confidential. This collaborative effort provides assessment services to the community as well as training opportunities to school psychology graduate students. All assessments are offered using a sliding-scale fee structure, based on family income. Contact Laura Ionescu at 757.221.2362 for more information.

# Interview with Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska

**by Dr. Kimberley Chandler**

**Joyce VanTassel-Baska**

*This article was originally published in the Summer 2009 issue of the Systems Newsletter. It is reprinted in this issue as we begin to take a look back at the 25-year history of the Center for Gifted Education (CFGE). The focus of this interview is Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, who founded the CFGE in 1987 and who retired in September of 2009. Dr. VanTassel-Baska added some information to some of her responses in order to update readers on what she has been doing since her retirement.*

**Many people consider you to be the "guru" of curriculum in gifted education. Why did you choose curriculum as your emphasis?**

My background led me naturally to focus on curriculum. I'm a former secondary teacher of English and Latin who was very engaged in curriculum development when I was a teacher. I taught every high school grade level in both subjects. Therefore, I taught a total of eight different courses during my high school teaching career of seven and a half years. In addition, I also created electives and new courses of study, including a course called World Literature and the Bible for senior level students. I also taught Advanced Placement Literature. So, very early on in my career I was very involved in curriculum development work.

When I became an administrator of gifted programs in Toledo, I also was very involved with curriculum development for gifted learners. I published two guides in my first three years; one on the world of the gifted K-6 for elementary teachers and the Phoenix Project curriculum guide for high school teachers which was an integrated interdisciplinary curriculum with a guidance component that was used in all three inner city high schools in Toledo at that time. So, in my first ten years of work in education, I was very involved with curriculum development. It continued to be a major part of my work in Illinois where I was involved in a federal curriculum project using Adler's Syntopicon for organizing curriculum and designed and developed four major units of study for that project. Then at Northwestern I had a grant from the Joyce Foundation to develop curriculum in math, science, and technology for high ability learners. So by the time I came to William and Mary, I had a deeper level of experience with curriculum for the gifted than most people. Even though most people are not aware of that history, it served me well for engaging in my Javits curriculum work here at William and Mary.

This background has continued to serve me well in retirement as I regularly do contracts with universities and state departments to design curriculum for both K-12 students and coursework for their teachers in this country and internationally as well.

**Why do you think it became such an important area of endeavor for you?**

Partially it was my own sense that it was a good fit for my skills and interests based on the experiences that I've described. However, I also saw curriculum as a weakness in terms of what was not happening in gifted programs. People were using units on chocolate, for example, with gifted students and justifying it because content doesn't matter or so it was suggested. In addition to that, I think it's fair to say that the Javits projects

encouraged curriculum development, leading to our contracts to design curriculum in science and language arts. So it was a happy union of my background experiences and skills, coupled with a need in the field, and the accessibility of resources that really led the Center for Gifted Education in this direction.

I find that I still enjoy the enterprise, including work on new Jacob's ladder books, a leadership curriculum for students at all precollegiate levels, and a Latin curriculum for English teachers to implement with gifted learners. Playing with ideas continues to delight and surprise me.

**How did you develop the Integrated Curriculum Model?**

I started with a review of the literature in 1986 as to what curriculum approaches were effective with gifted learners. The ICM grew out of my examination of research that suggested that advanced content was the most powerful approach that we had, followed by enrichment approaches that were predominantly focused on higher level thinking and product development. There was also a scattered literature base on interdisciplinary approaches, such as concepts, issues or actual themes. Even though the literature base was uneven in supporting the efficacy of those three components, they represented three very distinct approaches to organizing curriculum. My underlying thesis was always that we could get a richer curriculum if we utilized all three as opposed to utilizing only one approach. This model has worked quite well over the past twenty years to design differentiated curriculum and to link the work to the content standards. So even though the ICM model preceded the content standards, it in fact presaged such a design and alignment approach.

It has proven quite durable as well as the organizing framework for new curriculum, designed around the Common Core State Standards. The Indiana High Ability Project, which will provide units of study online to teachers of the gifted, has employed the model for unit development by teachers.

**Have you ever considered a revision to it? If so, what would it be?**

Well, I would revise it if I felt that in fact there was research suggesting that there was another approach to curriculum that isn't covered by the model that would be effective. I do believe that the model could be augmented by a major emphasis on social and emotional development and career development. I think both of those areas would be possible enhancements to the ICM in its current form. However, I do not see the need to make the model more complex. If anything, it is already too complex.

My most recent work with curriculum convinces me even more that the model is sufficiently differentiated and challenging for use with gifted learners at all stages of development, that it is coherent across subject areas and developmental levels, and that it offers teachers pathways for teaching what matters. If it contains all the important elements of what gifted students need and is workable by teachers, that meets a high standard. In recent publications, I have stressed the utility of the model, its ease of implementation into units of study, and its

continuing evidence base of effectiveness. The real purpose of a model is to approximate reality in regard to a phenomenon. I think the ICM also meets that test of reality.

**How does knowing that materials you have developed are used so widely and impacted so many make you feel?**

I don't spend a lot of time thinking about it. I certainly am pleased to know that children benefit from being provided high-powered and challenging curriculum. That makes me very happy. Beyond that, my only wish would be that more students could have that opportunity. I wish that schools were more open to trying innovative curriculum and instructional approaches that would allow that to happen, not just for the gifted, but to promote high end learning across the board.

In the years since I have retired, I continue to see how the work has taken on a life of its own and continues to be vital in the lives of students and their teachers. Given when this work began, it may now be seen as classic, implying that it has "legs" as long as publishing companies continue to keep it in print.

**What is the greatest barrier to providing excellent curriculum for gifted students?**

Educational institutions are set up to maintain the status quo and in the process of maintaining it they frequently overlook individual differences. So at one level, I would say that there is an institutional barrier just based on how educational institutions are organized. Beyond that, I would also say that teachers, as a part of those educational institutions, are charged to teach what has been approved by their communities and that's a set scope and sequence of curriculum at every grade level. So if I were to say what the greatest barrier is, it is this age-grade lock step model of teaching and learning. This is not the fault of teachers, but they become part of the problem when they feel that they do not have enough power or control to make changes in a curriculum diet that would benefit a core group of learners or even just one. Moreover, we have not charged schools with optimizing learning for anybody. We have only charged them with providing a minimum threshold of opportunities, and consequently it is the barrier of raising expectations to levels that schools were never intended to have to reach. When you think about the implications of raising the expectations of schools, that also becomes quite personalized in terms of raising the competence level of teachers, in terms of stretching their cognitive capacities and their capacity to organize classrooms in flexible ways. So you have another barrier related to teacher readiness and teacher capacity to deliver more high-powered curriculum opportunities.

**Recognizing that teachers are always going to write curriculum, what three things would you like for all teachers to understand/know/take into consideration when writing curriculum for gifted learners?**

Well, I would hate to limit it to three things, because I think that curriculum development is a complex enterprise that requires work over time. Curriculum products get better because people spend more time on them and try them out and learn from those tryouts how to improve curriculum products. So one of the basic

issues that teachers need to understand is that curriculum has to be designed and tried out and revised, then tried out again beyond just their classrooms in order to make claims about the quality of the product. Also, teachers need to understand that there is nothing magical in a curriculum that is going to produce learning in gifted students if we are not really targeting the nature of the learning that we want to accrue and ultimately collecting data on whether or not student learning has occurred as a result of what's gone on. Classroom-based action research on student learning thus is an important understanding that teachers need to have about building effective curriculum. Probably the third most critical understanding is curriculum design. Teachers need to understand that a curriculum has to be coherent and understandable by anyone who reads it, showing the relationship of the elements of goals down to the level of activities and materials. Lastly, principles of differentiation for gifted learners have to be well internalized in order for teachers to do a good job in designing curriculum for these learners.

Given the Indiana project on which I am now working, I also think teachers need to be open to being challenged as they continue to develop and implement new curriculum. The teachers in this project have been wonderfully flexible in this regard. Finally, they have demonstrated the value of development and implementation as twin realities in the process, producing logs as a result of piloting that strongly emphasize areas for revision and using pre/post student results for curriculum and instructional change decisions.

**What do you believe is required for the appropriate implementation of exemplary curriculum for advanced learners?**

I believe that what we do for advanced learners ultimately ends up being treated as an innovation, since it's not routinely happening in schools. What we know from the innovation literature suggests that teachers need to be well-prepared to teach a curriculum, which means they need to be trained on it and the underlying principles related to implementing that curriculum. That's why our William and Mary training model is one that is based on teaching-learning models that are imbedded in existing lesson plans. So teacher preparation with materials is critical.

The second feature that is critical is the support of administrators. Teachers need to feel support whenever they are doing anything that involves innovation, and administrators should be curriculum leaders in the building in terms of providing that support which can take many forms, including verbal, monetary, resources, or moral support if the teacher is challenged by parents or peers. Support may also come in the form of showcasing the work of teachers who are willing to step out and do something that is innovative in the context of the school. So, the administrator is crucial as a support structure.

I also think collegial support is important in terms of curriculum implementation. A teacher is going to be more effective with curriculum innovation if not just she at third grade is doing it but if her colleagues at fourth and fifth grade are also doing it and the other teacher in third grade across the hall is also doing it. There is value to

having a critical mass of teachers engaged in innovative curriculum implementation. Where it is done at multiple grade levels by multiple teachers you are likely to have greater support in terms of innovation, and teachers in turn can support each other relative to the implementation.

Moreover, there is a real need to have additional resources available to put toward the effort. By that I mean additional materials that may need to be purchased in the form of books, guides, or computer software programs that just make the implementation easier for teachers.

The last area that I want to highlight is the absolute necessity of curriculum monitoring and follow-up beyond professional development into classrooms to see that the innovative strategies and curriculum are being implemented effectively and as they were intended. Fidelity of implementation is one of our biggest problems in trying to institutionalize curriculum innovation. Unless the new curriculum becomes a part of teacher routine, it may have a "short shelf life" in the classroom.

In recent work, I can see that the piloting process is so valuable in teacher validation and verification of ideas as well as a way to weed out less useful ones. One teacher noted that she has grown more through this project than through any professional development experience she had participated in previously. Such a statement also suggests the need to consider curriculum development work as growth-producing if it is seen as an ongoing effort from writing to implementation to revision. The absence of any part of that cycle threatens to stunt the power of growth, not only for teachers but also for students as the recipients of the curriculum.

**How has the standards movement impacted curriculum for the gifted in both positive and negative ways?**

On the positive side, the new standards would actually raise the level of expectation and challenge for gifted learners if teachers were teaching to the standards as they were intended. Because they were designed down from a conceptualization of a practicing professional, the activities, the habits of mind, and the skills were high level. The downside of the standards only came about when the translation of them was hindered in two ways. First, it was hindered by insisting that we have fifty translations of a single set of high quality national standards. And in those fifty translations, the level of challenge went down, and the interpretation of the standards became much more leveled than it should have been. The second deterrent to effective implementation of standards came about when high stakes testing in fifty states was instituted to try to assess learning. In the process, these assessments became narrower than the standards and lower level. Thus, the instruction of teachers began to match up with the assessments and not with the standards.

Another asset of the standards was that they defined what high school graduates should know and be able to do in the new century. This marked the beginning of our focus on outcomes rather than objectives, a focus on high level performance as opposed to a developmental progression of skills, and an emphasis on the multiple dimensions that are associated with learning rather than only a skill-based orientation. Knowledge, skills, and

attitudes took front and center in terms of the new standards in a way that they had not in the past. However, in some instances the translations of these high level outcomes became faulty. Individual states did not carefully think through what the implications were for what students were able to do at given stages of development. An example would be here in Virginia where we had students learning about China before they learned about their own country or before they learned about their neighborhood because there was little attention to developmental progression.

Under the new common core standards, the assets of the former standards are still relevant to our discussion. However, the liabilities are somewhat reduced in that the new common core will be viewed as national standards with national assessment developing quickly as well. No longer will we have 50 separate iterations of what students need to know and be able to do and how we validate that. We now have all but four states endorsing the new common core in two subject areas, with science being developed this year as the third leg of the common core standards. (Now language arts and mathematics are in place). While the new common core standards are high level in some respects, they still require differentiation for gifted learners in others. Gifted education as a professional field must align its own new standards in curriculum, instruction, and assessment to this new common core by subject area to ensure that gifted learners are well-served in schools.

**Today's students are exposed to "bits and bytes" of information in their everyday lives. What implications for curriculum do you foresee as a result of the multi-media influence?**

This is not just a curriculum question; it's a question of "How will technology ultimately impact educational delivery systems at all stages of development, everywhere?" And I don't really feel that I know the answer to that. I think that the role of technology has expanded already in ways that are well beyond our thinking, certainly, just a decade ago even. The attractiveness of online courses for students K-12 has grown exponentially from early efforts like the Stanford EPGY program to the Online Learning Links at Northwestern now to multimedia opportunities like CTYOnline through Johns Hopkins and other kinds of telecommunication models. I think the future of the education of the gifted will lie in these kinds of options that will be available to families of means. My concern is that it will be available to those who can afford it, not to those necessarily who need it the most. There is also in the new technology an underlying assumption that people are self-directed and independent learners. And in my years of working with the gifted, I do not fundamentally believe, nor do we have the data to show, that that is the case in the majority of gifted students. Many gifted students are satellite learners who require a high-powered instructor who can motivate them and ready them to take on challenging learning tasks. They also require the interaction of peers who are equally able and interested in the learning process. The lack of accessibility to both of those features in online learning environments, I believe, will continue to hinder the role of technology as the total answer to the educational needs of the gifted.

In my recent work with teaching hybrid courses (i.e., face-to-face coupled with online) to teachers in gifted education at Rutgers University, I have come to see the value of the combined use of both approaches. Online

learning provides each learner equal access to question response and reflection, often not possible in face-to-face classroom discussion modes. Interaction among peers is also demanded, rather than left to the mood of the moment. The instructor also has greater control over the mechanisms of student discussion than is true in person. Yet the bookend model of beginning a course in person and ending one that same way is irreplaceable in solidifying the learning experience at a human level, allowing personality to emerge, and the flow of conversation to go in many directions. Based on my observations with these courses over two years, the use of online coursework will continue to grow exponentially both in teacher education and precollegiate learner education. The cost-effectiveness coupled with the ease of access to educational opportunity will surely trump outmoded idealistic notions of what constitutes quality in education. As technology and pragmatic knowhow improves, education of the gifted will become an online global enterprise.

**What was the most interesting curriculum project with which you have been involved? What made it interesting?**

I must confess that all curriculum projects that I have ever been engaged in have been interesting, because they have all been totally absorbing and challenging in their own right. But I would be less than candid if I did not say that the project that I have enjoyed the most over the years has been the development of language arts curriculum because it is closest to my own background and content expertise. Both the original language arts units and the Athena Project, which involved further development of new language arts materials including Jacob's Ladder and additional Navigators, were special.

These types of projects continue to be favorites as I guide others in the development of curriculum, as I design new curriculum myself, and as I collaborate on new curriculum projects of import and interest.

**What one curriculum project have you most wanted to do but have been unable to do so far?**

There are several actually. One is developing concept-based curriculum in shorter units of study and hooking those concepts to multiple subject areas. That to me would be an interesting project. Another would be an interrelated arts project, whereby you take the visual arts, music, and the performing arts, and you weave them together in terms of helping students arrive at deeper levels of thinking and feeling as well as just doing the arts.

Unfortunately, these projects have taken a back burner in retirement as other projects have crowded them out. The work on leadership and foreign language curriculum have proven to be more critical as I move those curricula forward to publication this next year.

**Are there any areas that you believe should be a focus for the field of gifted education in the future?**

The field has to "grow up" in my view in terms of the issue of curriculum and instruction. It has to come to grips with the fact that we should not be using curriculum with the gifted, our very best learners, where there is

no evidence base for the effectiveness of its use. When I first came into the field in the early 1970s, curriculum was a series of activities made up by the teacher that were differentiated for the gifted. And we are right back to that same notion in serving the gifted in regular classrooms. It's a regressive state that is troublesome in terms of what we could be doing, so I would hope that the field would wake up to the fact that we have strong materials that could be built on for future projects and for future work.

We also need to realize that the world of curriculum for the gifted is wide open as opposed to narrow because of the new common core standards or because of the school-based interpretation of the standards. I would love to see a return of the teaching of philosophy at grades four, five, and six to gifted learners. I would love to see more of an emphasis on spatially oriented subject matter, like robotics. I would love to see much more of an emphasis on the serious teaching of leadership and foreign language in elementary and middle schools. These are all appropriate subject matters for gifted learners at the earlier stages of development that would be of interest and again growth-producing. Yet, we have narrowed the vision of curriculum for the gifted to being what individual teachers are capable of delivering and what is tested on high stakes state assessments.

**Is there anything else you want to add relative to needed emphases in the field of gifted education?**

I think that there is a real need for more research and development work in curriculum in all subject areas and at all requisite stages of development. There is still a lot we don't know about what works at different levels for gifted learners.

**What have you been doing since your retirement?**

I find that my retirement has opened up new avenues of work for me. Starting a certificate program in gifted education at Rutgers University has allowed me to teach in a hybrid environment in another state that has no higher education programs in the gifted and to realize the untapped potential of teachers to learn more deeply the best practices of the field. Doing interesting consultant work with the state of Indiana, with Johns Hopkins University in Kazakhstan, and with the Hong Kong Academy, I have come to see the power in design and development of strong curriculum, even when it is delivered by others in online and face-to-face modes. Continuing to consult with the same districts over time has also been a joy for me. For example, to see the Pinellas County, Florida, gifted middle schools evolve over the past five years I have worked with them to a point where I will now evaluate their progress is gratifying. Evaluation work has also continued to absorb my interest, from the state of Washington to Pennsylvania to Florida. As a recently elected member of the NCATE policy board on accreditation of teacher education colleges and universities (2010), I find my background well-suited to this challenge and continue to do reviews and audits of gifted programs, do off-site and onsite visits for full institutional reviews, and assess the accuracy and appropriateness of reviews done by other national teams. My interest in all of this work has also led to new publications, some curricular and some more traditionally academic in orientation. This work has also spawned more conference presentations both here and abroad on

the relevant topics of interest. As more books emerge in gifted education that have invited chapters, I find myself doing about one a month in response to invitations, many of them about the ICM model. So you can see that retirement from the Center and an academic position has not led me away from the field of gifted education but rather more deeply into it in those areas that are growth-producing and joyful.

To have received three national awards since retirement from three different national/international organizations was also gratifying in that it provides a gauge for the value of the work to the field at large. In 2010, I received the Distinguished Service Award from NAGC and in the same year was elected a Fellow of the AERA. In 2011, I received the Mensa Award for lifetime achievement to research in intelligence.

**Is there anything else that you would like to add?**

None of the curriculum work that has gone on here at William and Mary would have been possible without the strong collaborators that I've enjoyed working with over the years. This would include teachers like yourself, Kim, and others who have been graduate students and have been placed in a position of engaging in the curriculum development projects. But also staff people at the center with whom I have worked and who have added so much to the level of curriculum that we have been able to put out. Beverly Sher, Dana Johnson, and Linda Boyce are the three who come to my mind as being extremely powerful in really influencing that early work in very positive ways. And then, I would say in the last eight years or so, the collaborative work with Bruce Bracken, Carol Tieso, and other staff members here at the center like yourself, Tamra (Stambaugh), Elissa (Brown), and Catherine (Little), have made our curriculum work stronger and more credible.

Since retirement, I have continued my collaboration and relationship with many of my former doctoral students. We have presented together, written together, and done collaborative projects together. There is no more joyful experience than knowing that others have learned and practice the habits of mind so necessary to leading a creative and productive life.

## Where are they now? Alumni Features

Since the inception of the graduate program in gifted education at the College of William and Mary, many individuals have had to opportunity to work at the Center for Gifted Education (CFGE) in assistantships as they pursued master's and doctoral degrees. Other students have served the CFGE as conference presenters, teachers in the Saturday and Summer Enrichment Program, or curriculum writers. In each issue of *The Bridge*, we will include an article about a master's degree graduate and one about a doctoral degree graduate. The alumni featured in this issue are Kimberley Thoresen and Dr. Lou Lloyd-Zannini.

## Master's Program Graduate

**Kimberley Thoresen is now a fourth grade teacher at Rosa Parks Elementary in Prince William County.**

**Describe your career path.**

I graduated in 2009 with my M.A.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction in Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary. My undergraduate degree was a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Elementary Education, PreK-6, which I completed in 2008 at The College of William and Mary. In the summer of 2009, I was hired to work as a classroom elementary school teacher in Prince William County Schools. I have worked at Rosa Parks Elementary School from 2009 to the present as a fourth grade teacher. In addition to working as a classroom teacher, I have participated in several professional development activities offered by the school system. In the summer of 2010 I took part in a training course about the Professional Performance Process (PPP), which was a revamping of the performance appraisal system across the county. I then had the opportunity to train fellow coworkers at Rosa Parks about the new system. I also worked with the Prince William County Schools Science Department to write inquiry-based lesson plans for a Science Handbook, which was distributed to elementary schools across the county in the spring of 2011. In August of 2011, I served as a facilitator for the new teacher orientation (F.I.R.S.T Training) for new fourth grade teachers in Prince William County Schools. Currently, I am the ILT (Instructional Leadership Team) member for the fourth grade teachers in my school and serve as a leader and representative for our grade level at school-wide meetings with the administration and other grade level leads.

**Did you have an assistantship at the CFGE? If so, describe your assignments there and how you have used the skills acquired in your subsequent positions.**

I worked at the CFGE during the fall of 2008 and spring of 2009. I worked closely with Kimberley Chandler in the creation, revision, and formatting of the teaching model cards, various language arts and science units, and the Navigators novel study guides. I also worked to assist where needed with preparation for the National Association for Gifted Children conference, the National Curriculum Network Conference, and professional development programs that Kimberley Chandler and Joyce VanTassel-Baska led around the globe.

I have been able to leverage many of the skills I acquired while working with the CFGE and have become active in shaping curriculum within the county and taking on leadership positions within my school. For example, I have used what I learned about curriculum development to help with the creation of inquiry lessons for the science department. When working with my students, I have been able to incorporate the teaching model cards, which have helped me include graphic organizers throughout my teaching.

**What was most memorable to you about your experiences in the master's program?**

The most memorable experiences during my master's program were attending the NAGC conference in Tampa, Florida, and defending my thesis in front of Joyce VanTassel-Baska and Carol Tieso. Both experiences will forever be in my mind. After attending the NAGC conference, I realized that I have a duty as an educator to continue to grow throughout my career. One way to continue to learn and help my colleagues and students will be to continue to attend professional conferences in order to gain more knowledge about what is available for our students. Standing in Joyce's office, presenting my PowerPoint and thesis focused on perfectionism in gifted students, was an overwhelming and daunting task. Once I finished my defense and answered their questions, I realized that although it wasn't perfect, I did fine. I had completed my master's program and they signed off that I'd completed the thesis. I had such a great sense of accomplishment after all the time I had spent developing and preparing my thesis and it was a rewarding finale to my time at William and Mary.

**What advice would you give to someone who is considering pursuing a master's degree related to gifted education?**

Find a subject that interests you and pursue it. Gifted education is a way to help students enrich their experiences in schools, and it's a way to ensure that every child is being challenged through differentiation of curriculum. Although I currently work in a fourth grade classroom with a variety of learners, knowing how to challenge my students who are gifted makes it easier to keep them engaged and interested in everything we do.

**Other comments:**

I truly enjoyed my five years at William and Mary, and I return to Williamsburg often to visit campus and the colonial area. I haven't visited the new education building, but I look forward to exploring the new facility and perhaps attending a conference at William and Mary soon.

## Doctoral Program Graduate:

**Lou Lloyd-Zannini, Ph.D. currently teaches at Rhode Island College, Feinstein School of Education and Human Development as a department chair. He is also head of school at Henry Barnard Laboratory School.**

**Describe your career path since completing your doctorate.**

2002 was the year of my doctoral graduation, with the school's new Ph.D. in Educational Planning, Policy, and Leadership with an emphasis on Gifted Education. I also completed my Ed.S. in Educational Leadership with an emphasis on Gifted Education in 1997, just as the doctoral program was transitioning to an Ed.D./Ph.D. option. Though the Ph.D. required more work, I believed that was the best option for me. Actually, though many might title theirs "The Long and Winding Road," my career path was pretty clear cut. I was already teaching in a master's program in a local Christian university, where I had developed and directed a high-intensity M.Ed. for practitioners. I added a new program for alternative initial licensure in 2005, a really good choice considering the market at that time.

Then, in 2010, I accepted the invitation of Rhode Island College – the smallest state's original teaching college – to join their Feinstein School of Education and Human Development as a department chair. Here, the Henry Barnard Laboratory School is my department, and I serve as the head of school. The laboratory school is an incredible place where I have the opportunity to interact with immensely talented faculty innovating, documenting, and disseminating new, best-practice curriculum and methodologies.

**Did you have an assistantship at the CFGE? If so, describe your assignments there and how you have used the skills acquired in your subsequent positions.**

Absolutely! In fact, it was interesting being one of the first men in the Center on an almost daily basis. The internship was for one semester only, and then I was picked up by another university to teach full time. Though I wish it could have been longer, so that I could have interacted more with Dr. VanTassel-Baska and the incredible curriculum research teams, I learned so much from my time there.

My role was to handle the electronic side of the Center, doing the curriculum listservs, and functioning as computer curmudgeon (I hated Macs in those days…). But to be honest, I learned far more about things like collaboration, scholarship, and what it was to be aspiring to the academy than I did anything else. Those skills – along with my familiarity with ecommunication, and even the Mac (which I now operate on exclusively) – have served me well in my career since. When combined with the friendships and professional relationships in the field established in those days, my time at CFGE really has been foundational to my professional growth and success.

**What was most memorable to you about your experiences in the doctoral program?**

The people. Without question, the most memorable part of being a member of the W&M CFGE family was just that: We were family. We encouraged each other, redirected each other, corrected each other, worked and studied with each other, socialized with each other, and basically shared each other's lives and dreams. Even now, as I reflect back on the program, the first thing that jumps to mind are the people I've met, starting with Joyce – who still qualifies as the most amazing human I've ever met; the friends from our cohort, many of whom I communicate with fairly regularly; and the people across the country and world in our field who I so enjoy seeing at conferences and other events.

William & Mary's School of Ed really is an amazing place because of the talent and quality faculty there. Our professors – folks like Dr. Bob Hanny, Dr. James Stronge, Dr. Tom Ward, and of course, Dr. Joyce VT-B – and our incredible dean, Dr. Ginnie McLaughlin, are absolutely top shelf scholars and amazing teachers, guides, and mentors. My colleagues have gone on to do great things at other colleges, in state systems, and in curriculum and instructional design for gifted kids.

People make a program. William and Mary's people made the program memorable.

**What advice would you give to someone who is considering pursuing a doctorate related to gifted education?**

The designation of the doctorate as a "terminal degree" is not accidental. It will kill you if you're not prepared! So how do you prepare? Allow a survivor to suggest a few things.

1. Understand the field. It sounds really cool, being in gifted education, but unless you realize that we are not always embraced with great admiration and affection, you could be in for a shocker. Remember that gifted ed is chronically underfunded, and typically underrepresented. Professionals in the field are sometimes dismissed as "extraneous" by mainstream and special educators. So be realistic: Though the field is vitally important, life in it is not always going to be pleasant or enjoyable. There will be days when you just want to walk away. It's all balanced by the great days when you actually make progress, of course, but that doesn't help when you're banging your head against the wall.
2. Choose your school with great care. Be sure that there's a very close match between you and where you want to earn your degree. Don't just look for "big names" in the field, or the prestige of the program. Look at core issues. How comfortable are you with the school's conceptual framework and how it plays out in day-to-day practice? Can you embrace the educational philosophy and practices the school espouses? Is your focus the same as that of the school? Will the degree you intend to pursue allow you to do the work you want to do? Can you afford the full investment in the program? All of these are so important.
3. Be sure that you're ready to fully engage once you start. Seriously, be sure that you've got your financial ducks in a row, that you can allocate adequate time to really get in the process (Think travel $$

$ -- always allow double what you think you need), and that your support systems are in place. If you're in a relationship, be sure that your partner is 110% behind you, because you're going to need that support and encouragement, especially when you hit the potholes on the road to the doctorate. And finally, remember your family! (Yes, there will be days when you may forget them!)

4. Engage with abandon. If you can't get into your doctoral studies and give everything you have in you to the process, get out now. There's no value in wasting your time and money on something you'll never finish.

**Other comments:**

Earning a doctorate is – for better or for worse – a life-changing event. You will never be the same again. So engage with care, and once you have, go for it with everything you've got in you.

Of course, being at a phenomenal place like William and Mary's CFGE makes that a whole bunch easier. I will always be indebted to the people and the program there. Be sure to check it out if you're thinking of a Master's or Doctoral degree. You won't regret it.

## Contact Us

Phone: 757-221-2362
Fax: 757-221-2184
Email: thebridge@wm.edu

## Mailing Address:

Center for Gifted Education
College of William & Mary
PO Box 8795
Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795

## Physical Address (UPS/FedEX only) :

Center for Gifted Education
College of William & Mary
301 Monticello Avenue
Williamsburg, VA 23185

## Staff

*The Bridge: Connecting Research to Practice*
Anthony M. Washington, Editor
thebridge@wm.edu, 757.221.2362

## Editorial Board