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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Suzanne Palmer

SPRING is upon us, and with that we anxiously await the blooming of colorful flowers, longer days, and the wrap-up of another school year. I know I am always amazed at how quickly each school year goes. With the end of another school year upon us, I took some time to reflect on this past year as president of the OAGC.

This past year the OAGC once again offered three successful professional learning and networking opportunities for gifted intervention specialists, gifted coordinators, general education teachers, administrators, parents, and other gifted advocates. Each one of these events offered something new for attendees and helped advance our work in the field of gifted education. The OAGC not only brought in nationally-known experts in the field but also connected conference attendees with experts right here in Ohio.

In response to a recent nationwide interest to use local norms in the identification of gifted learners, the most recent addition of the *OAGC Review* highlighted a white paper focusing on the use of local norms. This paper was a collaborative effort between the OAGC governing board members Colleen Boyle and Leanna Ferreira. They brought to light the recent research behind the use of local norms for identification as well as the positives and the possible pitfalls of using local norms instead of the national norms Ohio currently uses in its identification of students who are gifted. This continues to be a hot topic within the field and one that the OAGC will continue to monitor.

The organization continues to monitor and advocate for the expansion of the Ohio Department of Education's chart of approved test instruments to include appropriate assessment instruments for the identification of gifted learners. It is the OAGC's work to ensure that we have a list of assessment instruments that will identify students from traditionally underrepresented



populations, such as low socioeconomic status, English learners, and twice-exceptional learners. Not only are we continuing to advocate for a diverse list of instruments, but we also continue to push for enough instruments to assist districts in maintaining compliance with Ohio law in the identification of students.

While it has been a busy year with much work accomplished, anyone who's been in the field of gifted education for any length of time knows that there is always much work to be done in continuing our advocacy for this population of learners. We are grateful for an executive director who works tirelessly to monitor legislative initiatives to keep the organization and other members of the gifted community informed. By being informed, we can continue to make our voices heard in the advocacy of students who are identified and for those yet to be identified as gifted here in the state of Ohio.

I wish everyone a wonderful and relaxing summer.

NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REGARDING THIS ISSUE OF THE OAGC REVIEW

Due to COVID-19, we are all adjusting the way we are working and living. The OAGC is no exception. This issue of the OAGC Review will be available only electronically due to emergency measures put in place by Governor Mike DeWine. Also, some readers may notice that some articles are not perfectly proofed. We apologize for this and hope that we will be able to make the fall issue as perfect as we can.

Please note that almost all the articles were submitted prior to the COVID-19 crisis. One or two articles may seem a little incongruent with the current times.

The OAGC is trying as best we can to post relevant resources for both gifted professionals and parents to assist in providing for gifted children at home. It is a work in progress. If you have a great resource, please send it to anngift@aol.com. After reviewing it, I will post it at <http://oagc.com/resources.asp> under the COVID-19 Links topic heading.

Finally, to all of our friends out there in gifted land, stay safe, take care of your family and friends, and we will see you on the other side of this crisis.

COORDINATOR CORNER

Creative Thinking Should Look Like Legos from the 80s, Not Legos from the 21st Century

By Todd Stanley, OAGC Coordinator Division Chair

WHEN I was a boy, all those many eons ago, one of my favorite pastimes, like most young boys, was building with Legos. The way Legos worked back in the 80s is that you got a set that had all different sorts of shapes and sizes laid out in a beautiful Crayola cornucopia. At least that was how the set started. After about two times of using it, the pieces, colors, and extra things that had somehow snuck their way into the box, such as coins or paper clips, were all mixed together, and you spent a good amount of time rooting through different compartments. But this randomness sort of mirrored your building process. When you decided to build some-

thing, say a car, you picked whichever pieces looked the most appropriate or were closest by, and you snapped them together, hoping it would take the shape you had in your mind. Sometimes it did, sometimes it didn't, but the most important thing, and something I was not even aware of, was my creative thinking process. If I wanted to build a particular something, I had to figure out for myself how to do it. Sometimes it was a matter of throwing pieces together and morphing them into something you didn't even expect but were pleased by. It was like I being given a lump of clay and told to make whatever I could think of.

So, you could imagine my joy when my two daughters, who did not take a liking to baseball, reading, or exploring creeks, which were activities I spent most of my childhood doing, wanted to play with Legos. I was so excited I took them to the store and let them pick out a set they wanted to build. My first realization that things were much different was the sticker shock. Legos in the 21st century are expensive. A relatively small set can run around \$25, and there are larger sets that run into the hundreds of dollars. This aside, the most disappointing thing to me about the 21st century Lego was when I opened the box and poured out its contents: the first thing I spied was an instruction manual about the thickness of a magazine. The Legos themselves were cordoned off into separate bags labeled A, B, C, and so on. The booklet turned out to be the step-by-step instructions for how to put the structure together. You open bag A, put together this piece, then that one, then that one, following the illustrations in the booklet. Then you move on to bag B. You do this until all the bags are used and your structure looks just like the one on the box. Legos had gone from something to build with creatively to a puzzle to construct. It was paint-by-numbers Lego building, where following directions and being compliant was much more important than being creative. The offenses became even more egregious when I suggested to my daughter we take the thing apart. These Legos weren't to be used again she informed me. Instead, they were designed to be used only once and then put on display like a museum piece. As much as I liked spending time with my daughters and putting this Lego structure together, I couldn't help but lament the loss of creativity in using Legos and the replacement with this Orwellian model of having to do things a particular way.

In my over twenty years in education, I feel that the same thing has happened. Instead of teachers using their creativity to plan lessons that will challenge their students, they are handed canned curriculum or programs that show them step-by-step how to teach it. The byproduct of this is that the canned curriculums have teachers teaching cookie-cutter lessons with Widget-like products. Students are being prevented from using creativity more and more because we want them to be able to produce the learning that is on the outside of the box (i.e., the state testing).

As gifted coordinators, we need to be providing students with more opportunities to be creative. This is especially relevant given that we are now identifying students as gifted in creative thinking. The struggle with providing services for this talent is that school districts have difficulty categorizing what that looks like. Here is the problem with that thinking: if it is truly creative thinking, then we don't know what it looks like, just like those Legos I used to play with as a child.

So when we have conversations in gifted-land about how to provide services for creative thinking, I become a little chafed when people suggest pull-out classes or otherwise planned programs. I think this goes against the entire concept of creative thinking. The basic formula for creative thinking is giving children less structure and more space. It does not need special instructions or a steadfast structure. It simply requires students to have the space to develop solutions of their own making. This is why I think project-based learning does an excellent job of teaching creative thinking as long as students have input and decision-making power in how they show what they have learned. Genius Hour is another loose structure where students can be creative while at the same time learning something they care about. It can be done in the regular classroom, provided teachers give students the opportunity to engage in this sort of thinking. For example, if you have a student who aced the pre-assessment, don't make her go through the curriculum she has proven she already knows. Instead let her develop an independent project that either allows her to expand on it or to explore something else she has wanted to learn more about.

What we eventually did with my daughters' Legos is take the fabricated structures apart and throw all of the pieces into various plastic bins, sometimes purposely separating pieces from the same structure so that they would never be used together again. When my younger daughter goes to her room to play Legos now, she makes bowling alleys, ice cream shoppes, zoos, and all sorts of creative structures that were not on the box. What if we did that with some of the curriculum we have in the classroom? What if we provide opportunities for children to create?

Boost Student Learning with Metacognition

By Lahela Snyder, Gifted Supervisor, MCECSC

Sarah Schleeauf, OAGC Teacher Division Chair, Gifted Supervisor, MCECSC

FOR students to be fully prepared with a 21st-century education, teachers should teach *how* to learn coupled with *what* to learn. From the time students start as bright-eyed kinders all the way to graduation day, their schedule is filled with content lessons. It seems as though packing in content like sardines in a can is the approach, since there is just so much to learn within the standards. However, how do students learn to navigate all that content? What instruction do educators offer students to become self-directed learners who can transfer and apply content among a variety of situations?

According to the work of John Hattie, teaching metacognitive strategies to students has an effect size of .69 on student achievement. Metacognition is a highly effective intervention that builds a student's knowledge about their own cognition and ability because it uses higher-order thinking skills and increases student engagement. It helps them navigate the how, when, and why of their own understanding. Our brains are hard-wired to look for patterns and make meaning of information. Students who use cognitive assets know what to do to improve their learning. Metacognition development allows for student autonomy and self-directed learning.

WHAT IS METACOGNITION?

Metacognition is simply thinking and reflecting on one's own thought processes in learning. It is especially helpful to reflect upon the thinking which led to mistakes, in an effort to improve and learn from them. Students who have strong metacognitive skills are able to monitor factors that impact performance in learning, understand when strategies are working to help them improve, and when a strategy is necessary as a means of their own evaluation.

When a student is using metacognition while reading a word that she doesn't know, she might look for roots or prefixes that are familiar or for context clues in and around the sentence in which it is used. Then, the student will use resources to check her understanding by looking up the word in a glossary or dictionary. These skills are valuable in all aspects of learning, retaining, and applying knowledge across all contents and disciplines.

Benefits that students acquire from engaging in metacognition include a positive growth mindset, the ability to set individualized learning goals, increased ability to focus and activate working memory and to self-monitor their learning progress. Students who struggle with executive functioning, higher-order thinking, and self-regulation can all benefit from the improvements over time by using metacognition.

METACOGNITIVE SKILLS





In order to improve the metacognitive skills of students, educators must demonstrate reflective learning themselves. As the leader in the classroom, consider demonstrating your own learning in action. Begin with modeling your own metacognition by using a think-aloud approach. By thinking aloud, you, as the lead learner in your classroom, can demonstrate a concrete example of how to decode words, use problem-solving strategies, or correct deliberate math mistakes for your students. Have students ask themselves questions like:

- What can help make me a better learner?
- Am I focused on driving my learning or letting it take care of itself right now?
- What are my study habits?
- Can I do anything to improve my study habits?
- Are there other ways to think about a problem or other possible solutions?

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE METACOGNITION

1. Teach your students a growth mindset. Gifted learners often struggle with developing a growth mindset because they come to school with a jumpstart by already knowing a lot of things. This works counterproductively to developing a growth mindset because they associate *easy* with *being smart*. Effort, hard work, and learning then take a role reversal and are associated with *not* being smart; this diminishes a healthy growth mindset. Empower your learners to learn how to grow their brain!
2. Ensure students have ample opportunity to be challenged with things that they do not already understand. Providing practice to students so that they are able to recognize the signs when they need to employ a strategy to help them learn increases their metacognitive reasoning. Students need opportunities to see themselves struggle at not knowing something and then be rewarded with the sense of accomplishment when they select the right tools from their toolbox to learn.

DOK DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE SNAPSHOT

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Recall	Skills and concepts	Strategic thinking	Extended thinking
			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic recall of information, such as a fact, definition, term, or procedure Requires students to follow a formula or recipe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete multiple steps in order to find a solution Requires students to make informed decisions about problem-solving and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasoning, planning, using evidence, or a higher level of thinking Requires students to draw conclusions from observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex reasoning, developing, or thinking over a period of time Requires students to design and conduct an experiment
<p>Keywords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Recall Use Measure 	<p>Keywords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classify Organize Estimate Collect & display data 	<p>Keywords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justify Explain Draw conclusions 	<p>Keywords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relate Make connections

- Be intentional about providing reflective opportunities for students to consider what they did not know before and what they now know as a result of learning.
- Employ the use of learning logs, journals, blogs, or other cognitive skill tracking tools.
- When assessing student learning, provide both depth and complexity in questions asked to students. Increase rigor and engage all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) framework to allow students to demonstrate what they know about a topic.
- Increase classroom discussion and opportunities for students to develop their own opinions, challenge their own opinions, and be sensitive in appropriate academic discourse on a variety of topics. This promotes higher order thinking and both collaborative and communicative skills.

If we really want to see changes in our students, we need to refrain from overfilling with content and increasing

the metacognitive approaches to learning. Students of all achievement levels can benefit from improved metacognitive skills and an increased growth mindset to be equipped for a career in the 21st century.

RESOURCES:

Dweck, Carol S. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Ballantine Books, 2016.

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Price-Mitchell, Marilyn. "Metacognition: Nurturing Self-Awareness in the Classroom." *Edutopia*, George Lucas Educational Foundation, 7 Apr. 2015, www.edutopia.org/blog/8-pathways-metacognition-in-classroom-marilyn-price-mitchell.

All Things Identification!

It is that time of year again—spring testing season. And along with other district and state assessments, your child may be given a test for gifted identification. Districts are required to evaluate students for some areas of giftedness twice during elementary school, but there is some leeway for districts to choose in which years they will do this. In addition, some districts schedule group assessments for identification more often than the minimum. To further complicate the situation students can also be identified at any time in any school year if the student is referred for assessment to the district. As you can see, gifted identification rules in Ohio can be tricky, but hopefully this article can clarify some information for parents.

What does it mean to be identified as gifted?

In Ohio, a gifted student is defined as one who “performs or shows potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment” (Ohio Revised Code §3324.01). This means that students who are identified as gifted tend to learn faster and understand more deeply than their typically developing peers. In Ohio, there are several categories, or areas, in which a student may be identified as gifted.

Superior Cognitive Ability: This means that a student has a high general intelligence and likely learns quickly both in school and in other settings.

Academic Giftedness: This is when a student’s giftedness is focused on a particular academic area. In Ohio, students can be identified in reading, math, science or social studies.

Creative Thinking: Gifted students in this category show high levels of inventiveness, intuition, and out-of-the-box thinking.

Visual and Performing Arts: These students have a talent in a particular area of the arts. In Ohio, students can be identified in dance, drama, music, and visual art.

In Ohio, by law, students can be identified only in these areas. They may be identified in more than one of these areas. Of course, a student may have special

abilities that are not listed here. Children may have extraordinary empathy, athletic ability, or leadership skills, for example. However, in Ohio, these are not areas of giftedness that are recognized by the state for the purposes of education at this time.

How can my child be identified?

In order to be identified as gifted in Ohio, the child must earn a particular score on an assessment that has been approved by the Ohio Department of Education for gifted identification. This means that the student first must take one of the tests that is on the ODE list of gifted assessments approved for identification. (If they take one that is not on the list, no matter how well they score, it cannot be used to label them as gifted.) Then, the student must score well enough on the test to get the identification. The exact score needed depends on the area being evaluated and on which assessment is being used. You can ask your school for more information on the specific tests they offer.

Students who attend public schools are tested at least twice during their school career in the following areas: Superior Cognitive, Math, Reading, and Creative Thinking. The first administration of testing must occur with students between the grades of kindergarten to 2nd grade. Testing a second time is required at some point when students are between 3rd and 6th grade. The grade levels being tested may vary between different school districts, as each district determines in which particular grade levels the two required testing administrations will occur. Many students who are identified as gifted get their identification through these assessments. Districts are not required to do scheduled, whole-class evaluations for science, social studies, or any of the arts.

What if my child is not being evaluated for giftedness this year, but I suspect they are gifted? Or what if I want my child evaluated in an area that is not one of the required areas?

Some school districts choose to do group-administered (meaning that everyone gets tested) assessments in other areas or in additional years, but this is not required. However, all public schools must administer tests to

by Monica Shaner, OAGC Parent Division Chair

students if they receive a referral. This means that if the public school receives a request in writing asking that a student be tested, a process for identification must commence. A student can be referred up to two times per year. Nearly anyone can refer a child, even the child themselves, but if the parent is not the person who requested the testing, districts must get parent permission before they can administer any instruments.

Often, the only way for a student to be identified in science, social studies, or in any of the arts is through this referral process. Students must be given an opportunity to be assessed up to twice per year in the areas of referral. However, the way this is handled can vary widely depending on the size of the school district, their commitment to gifted education, and the community in which they are located. If you are interested in referring your child for gifted assessment, contact your district's gifted coordinator and they should be able to help you with the process. If your district does not have a gifted coordinator, talk to your principal. He or she should be able to help you find out who handles these requests within your system.

What if I do not want my child tested for giftedness?

Districts cannot opt a student out of the required two evaluations for giftedness. Many students who might not appear to untrained eyes to be gifted, such as students with behavior difficulties or students with disabilities, may in fact be gifted, and those students have a right to be included in any group assessment for giftedness. In the case of a child with a disability, appropriate accommodations must be used. However, parents can choose to decline this testing for their child for any reason. If you feel that your child would be better off not participating in the identification procedures, you can contact your school in writing and opt out of the assessment.

What happens once my child gets identified?

If your child meets or exceeds the required score to be identified as gifted in one or more areas, you will receive notice (usually a letter) that tells you that they are identified as gifted and in which area(s) they are gifted. Often, that letter contains additional information about services

for gifted students or ideas for parents to help support their child.

There are no laws in Ohio requiring that a gifted student receive services or support for their giftedness. Districts have local control in this area, which means that they can determine whether or not to offer services. They can serve students in some identification areas and not others, as well as in some grades and not others. Talk with your school to get more information about how services work in your district.

Once a student has been identified, they remain identified for the rest of the time they are in school in Ohio. They never have to requalify for identification. So, after the first identification letter, you should continue to receive communication from the school each year. If there are services available for your child's area(s) of identification and grade level, you will get a written education plan that tells you about them. If there are not, you will receive something called a "no services" letter. Once your child has been identified, you will get either a written education plan or a "no services" letter each year for as long as your child attends a public school in Ohio.

What happens if I move?

If you move within the state of Ohio, your child's identification will move with them. You should not have to do anything to make this happen, but it is always a good idea to double check that the new school got the information. If you move to a different state, their rules may be very different, so you will need to work with the new school to find out more about their policies and procedures. If you moved to Ohio from another state and your child was identified as gifted in the other state, check with your district to see if the tests used and your child's scores meet the threshold for gifted identification in Ohio.

Gifted identification is complicated, and it can be a challenge for families to understand the process. If you have questions about gifted identification, be sure to reach out to your district's gifted coordinator. They will be able to help guide you and answer any questions you might have.

Civil War Pen Pals

INTRODUCTION

“But history is boring!” These are words I have heard many times as a rebuke to an upcoming history unit in my 5th-grade gifted pullout class. Students often cited this “boringness” as the reason why they were “no good” at social studies, did not like social studies, and so on. While the 40-year-old history nerd in me could not relate to such “blasphemy,” the 11-year-old in me sitting in my elementary school social studies class had no trouble relating to this. Flashback to eyes glazed over, gazing wistfully outside, drawing flowers on my desk. We’ve all been there.

Why was history boring? My teacher enjoyed the subject and she was perfectly nice. Why was it often times so painfully boring? In retrospect, I believe it boiled down to the instructional methods that were used or more importantly, not used. Envision 25 students sitting in desks in rows reading textbook chapters, completing the dreaded review questions at the end of each chapter, and dutifully copying notes from the chalkboard into notebooks. Teacher-led review sessions meant that eye contact must be avoided at all costs, as most of us became suddenly fascinated with anything on our desks or on the floor and prayed our names were never called.

While I still recall some of the topics I studied, few things of substance ever really stuck. One thing that did finally stick however, was reading Irene Hunt’s *Across Five Aprils*. It allowed me to see myself represented in the curriculum as the author relayed the story of the American Civil War through the eyes of Jethro Creighton, an 11-year-old child living in rural Illinois. As an 11-year-old child living in rural Ohio, this was just what I needed. This was relatable.

The importance of teaching a balanced perspective of history and making it relatable to students cannot be overstated. As a teacher about to embark on my own American Civil War unit with a group of 5th-graders, I wanted to ignite a passion in them or at least spark

an interest in learning about where we once were as a country compared with where we are now as a country. Resurrecting history and erasing the perceived “boredom” was a daunting task. If this unit was going to be engaging, relatable, and project-based, implementing student-centered teaching methods was critical. The purpose of this article is to describe the following: (a) the development of the American Civil War curriculum, (b) the design of an ongoing project-based assessment, (c) preliminary research findings which include writing development, challenges, and interventions, and (d) a conclusion. Please note that all names used throughout this text and in figures are fictitious characters created by students and are not students’ actual names. Any real names are entirely coincidental.

DEVELOPING THE CURRICULUM

The first step was developing the curriculum. I did so with the goal of designing an integrated unit that would appeal to multiple areas of interest, intelligence and learning styles. Bearing this in mind, I incorporated the following domains:

- Geography
- Economics
- Art & music
- Historical documents & legislation
- Key people & key battles
- Poetry
- Medical history
- Life off of the battlefield

I then generated a list of student-centered activities that would allow students to most thoroughly and powerfully demonstrate their learning. This list included

- Inquiry based reading
- Creative writing
- Drama (skit writing & acting)
- Creating (designing, building, etc.)

Bringing History to Life through an Integrated Curriculum and Project-Based Assessment

by Lyndi Maxwell, PhD

Once the curriculum was in place, the goal was to fit the student-centered activities within the aforementioned domains to design an ongoing project-based assessment that would allow me to monitor the progress of student learning on a weekly basis. I teach four different groups of students throughout the week, and each group attends my class for a full day once per week: hence the need for weekly, rather than daily monitoring of student learning.

DESIGNING AN ONGOING PROJECT-BASED ASSESSMENT

Fast-forward to the curriculum being developed: my next consideration was to determine how to assess student learning. Since this was approximately a three-month unit, the project needed to be interesting in order to stimulate motivation and engagement, and it needed to include a large degree of autonomy. There also needed to be an audience with which to share the final product. When students know they will ultimately share their work with an audience, learning becomes more purposeful and typically generates a higher quality of work rather than simply learning content for the sake of passing a test.

So what *should* students learn from this unit? As teachers, how do we sift through vast amounts of information to determine what the most important things are to assess? In my own history lessons in elementary school, the majority of instructional methods and assessments were top-down. The teacher and/or textbook authors decided what students should know and assigned one-sided, truncated textbook readings to provide said knowledge, followed by chapter review questions and tests. Having said that, some historical facts inarguably do need to be explicitly taught, and I am not suggesting that students be given carte blanche over everything they learn. I am suggesting, however, that if we want to know what our students have truly learned, we must move beyond what *we* want them to know and what *we* deem important to what *they* want to know and what *they* deem important. There must

be parameters and a balance within those parameters.

Perhaps the most effective way I have elicited students' true knowledge of a subject was through this particular project, my 5th-grade students' Civil War pen pal letters. This was an ongoing, three-month project that took place throughout the unit, wherein each student created his/her own unique, historically fictitious character living in the Civil War era. Assuming the role and perspective of said character, students chose a pen pal in the class. They wrote and exchanged weekly pen pal letters, wherein they recounted and often lamented the multifaceted hardships of life during this time period. Students created said characters by inventing the following attributes gleaned from their research:

- Name
- Location
- Family members
- Occupation
- Political views
- Opinions on war
- Extra characteristics and character information

Each week, students drew inspiration for their letters by applying what they had learned about Civil War-era history, geography, economics, politics, domestic life, and so on. Considerable attention was also given to character development from week to week. Naturally, the more students learned, the more their characters developed. For instance, "Dan," a Southern sympathizer at the onset of the war in 1861, had by 1864 become a conductor on the Underground Railroad. "Cynthia," a 17-year-old homebody from Florida once far too timid to set out on her own, had by the end of the war moved to South Carolina and graduated from nursing school, worked in a Confederate army hospital, and eventually moved to Ohio due to her disagreement with Southern politics. From abolitionists to activists, spies, housewives, nurses, generals,

and even a Little Drummer Boy, students filled their imaginations and pen pal letters with weekly tales of adventure, ever-changing relationship dynamics, and hardships on the home front.

Students also shared their letters with me each week and received written feedback which highlighted strengths and offered constructive criticism. Students wrote their subsequent letters based on a combination of teacher feedback, the progression of their character's development, and responses to their pen pal's previous letter. For instance, one piece of feedback stated

Keep it up: Wow! Super job including such a variety of things, from the black minstrel show to the new business to "John's" house being turned into a Union hospital! Was the man actually a northerner who turned it into a Union hospital? I always look forward to reading John's letters!

Now try: I wonder what types of things John has seen now that there is a Union hospital with wounded soldiers so close to him, and how this might influence his views on the war? Something to think about...

The final product of this three-month project resulted in a booklet that contained all pen pal correspondence. Students printed all their letters and their pen pal's letters and arranged them chronologically. They also designed front and back covers and bound the pages with twine. Families were invited in for a celebration, and students chose their favorite letters to read aloud during the celebration. Prior to reading the excerpts, they wrote summaries that described their characters along with their development and life experiences during this tumultuous time period. Additionally, they shared what this project taught them about the Civil War, and about themselves as writers (see figure A).

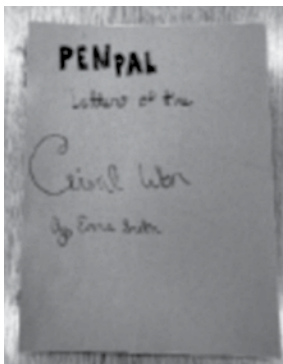


FIGURE A

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Preliminary research findings revealed substantial progress in students' writing development, primarily within the areas of vocabulary and character development. Throughout the letter correspondence, students who exhibited such development displayed an increasingly complex use of domain-specific vocabulary, while also exhibiting character development. Such development occurred as the progression of the war inflicted changes upon their characters' lives, which in turn led to complex relationship dynamics along with various forms of activism.

WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Students displayed an increase in the variety of domain-specific vocabulary used throughout their pen pal correspondence. This originated with heavy use of Civil War slang terms such as hornets, sawbones, and Arkansas toothpicks, and as correspondence progressed, slang terms dissipated and were replaced with vocabulary more specific to various domains of study, such as people, places, and battle strategies. For instance, names like General Beauregard, Antietam, and the Union Blockade began to appear. The mention of historical documents, legislation, and medical terms such as the Fugitive Slave Law, Emancipation Proclamation, and typhoid fever also gradually appeared as the use of slang terms decreased. Student writing began to reflect the depth and complexity of their research and newfound knowledge.

In conjunction with the use of more sophisticated and pertinent vocabulary, the complexity of character development began to take shape. For instance, as the war unfolded, some Southern characters began to question the morality of their original beliefs and loyalties. This often led to conflicts within families, thus resulting in challenging relationship dynamics. This was especially true for "Mary" when her brother "Bill" returned home from the Confederate line of duty to their Georgia home. Bill discovered that Mary, who originally supported the Southern cause, was now not only aiding and abetting an escaped family of slaves, but also secretly helping more slaves escape from a nearby plantation. After Mary witnessed a slave being whipped by his master, she was forced to reconsider her position on the war and felt compelled to take action. This generated a great deal of tension in their home as Bill refused to eat dinner with the family, refused to speak to any of their new houseguests, and became a recluse in his room until he and Mary eventually reconciled.

Other characters who were once timid and introverted began to engage in various forms of activism as the war progressed. Such activism manifested itself in the forms of abolitionism, public speaking, writing poetry, and/or Underground Railroad activity. A salient example of this is

the written exchange between “Professor Lee Earn,” a soft-spoken Chicago abolitionist, and “Hunter,” an introverted antislavery farmer who lived in Michigan with his cat “Yarn.” Lee’s African American wife, Abigail, was forcefully taken from him back to a Missouri plantation due to the Fugitive Slave Law. This inspired Lee to embark on an uncharacteristic and daring rescue mission, with safe houses arranged for him along the way thanks to his pen pal “Hunter.” Lee managed to cross the river and eventually freed Abigail, bringing her home to safety.

During the early years of the war, Hunter kept his abolitionist beliefs between himself, Lee, and Yarn. As the war progressed however, Hunter did some traveling and was inspired by a speech given by William Lloyd Garrison. During Hunter’s travels, he also observed how war continued to impact his fellow citizens’ quality of life and their treatment of one another. This inspired him to write some beautifully poignant poetry, and the progression of his first poem (about his cat Yarn) to his last poem (about the impact of war) is remarkable (see figures B & C, respectively).

“Yarn”

Your face is soft your nose is wet
Sometimes I wish I could forget
The things that you have done these years

To annoy me straight to tears.

FIGURE B

“Take Back the Light”

In the Dark you feel....nothing
You’re blinded by nothing
You can’t escape once you go in
It’s not easy in the dark
You live out of nothing except for your
leader
The only light
He tells you what to do and when
And if you fail too much you will be-
come a dark shadow
And you will spend the rest of your life
in darkness
When light enfolds everyone stumbles
out, able to be free of what they’ve
been through to take back the light

FIGURE C

Writing development in the areas of vocabulary and character development is clearly illustrated in the second, eighth, and twelfth (final) pairs of letters exchanged between Lee and Hunter (see figures D, E, F, G, H, & I).

July 25, 1861

Dear Lee

Saw your last letter hope those pupils ar gettin 'long fine. Nice speech bye the way it must of been hard wachin all those slaves gettin sold but if you crossed that river thins would not be pretty. Yarn has a cold but he will be fine. Im tryin to get my speech 'bout bull run to the public. In it i am talkin bout how the north flanked the south but the only reason the south won was cause they had all those graybacks firin hornets. My farms doin fine and the plants are comin up. Yarn made dirt in the farm soil so i'm keeping him in for the next few days. With the plants growing my bread basket is never empty, and I can make lots of green-backs. Sice we live so close to lake michigain we (me and yarn) went ther last week and yarn did't go anywhere close to the water but he liked it anyways. I'll send you a picture of him at the beach sleeping, he did't want to go when it was time to go he just wanted to nap. The wen I went to bed he was up all night., I was glad when we could go to the beach because workiin on a farm by yourself is hard but yarn watches me when i work and comes to me when i take a break fer a drink.

Your favorite possum, Hunter

Here is yarn at the beach, this is the only picture that i got at the beach of him not sleepin.



FIGURE D

July 30, 1861

Dearest Hunter,

John sent me a letter yesterday. He fought in the battle at/of Bull Run. Got scared, a little lots of bloody deaths.

This is what he said, "Well, you can't win them all. Dat Beauregard guy, so belligerant. Send'n thousands of men to battle us why? My dearest friends died in the battle, lucky I did not. Got to keep fight'n ya know? Love you dad. John"

I couldn't put off school another day, so I taught. I brought my Arkansas toothpick to teach my pupils. Maybe a little because I was scared. Ever since my wife, Abigale, was taken back to the south because of the fugitive slave law, I was starting to grow my anger into peacefulness but in the process I get more and more scared. John being a fresh fish and all, gets me even more scared. Those southerners breadbaskets will be aching after I express my emotions. Abigale was from Missouri she told me. So close to me, just across the Mississippi. When I gather courage, maybe I will go over and tell those Graybacks! They will want to skeddadle! Sorry. Bit angry. You must understand Possum! I do not believe in war either I believe in do'in what is right. War is annoying, it does happen, but all YOU need to do is to do the right thing.

Yours truly,

Lee Earn

FIGURE E

April 14, 1863

Dear Lee

I got home on February 6 and nothin much has happened to me since except Yarn wantin eventhin he drinks warm. Like I thought that warm milk was supposed to be a treat for him! My farm is slowly commin back and I'm grateful to be able to make money again.

Now more people are commin out of their houses to take walks but the weight of the war is still on everyones shoulders all the deaths bearing us down into the ground. We will never forget how many people died to win this war.

And I have one last thing for you. A poem bout the war and I thought you might want to hear it.

The war is still upon us bearing us down to the ground

You must be careful or youll be gone

Dont make a sound or a move

It migh hear you and catch you in the endless fire that it is.

Your Possum,

Hunter

Yarn Missed Me A lot



FIGURE F

May 20, 1863

Dear Hunter,

I am finally writing from the comfort of my own home. Abigale sitting right next to me. Let me tell you what happened. Hope ya don't have anything to do for the next hour er so!

So it was the dead of night, not a grayback in sight. So then I crept over to the fence guarding the plantation. I hadn't darn thought of getting through a fence but to my surprise, I found a nice old shovel. I was reluctant to touch it cuz it probably had grayback germs on it. I started to dig a big hole in the ground to climb through. Once I was in I had to tell snoop to shush so we wouldn't be heard. I snuck around and found Abigale wearing disgusting, ragged cloths. I gently woke her up. I am going to hand it of to Abigale. (Pardon her spell'n I am going to teach her.

I woke up on that stary night. What a vivid dreem! I thot. I looked up. My hed almost came rite of. The sight of Lee wus ustonishing. I nearly screamed but he stopped me wen he told me we were gett'n out of there. Wunce we were out Lee told me to get in a bush. That is al fer me so now bac to Lee.

So when we were in the bush, A red vest caught my eye. A soldier and he was coming right for us. Thank goodness that dog was there. He came out of the bush and bit the graybacks leg. After that we threw him in the river. Desperate times call for desperate measures, right? We had just escaped. Our job was done. I got an escape boat driver so we could get home fast. There was no one in Illinois so we were safe at home. Abigale has to be very careful because there are still grayback slave hunters around even at this point of the war. Sometimes I take Abigale and snoop to come listen to my speeches and things like that. You inspired me to make a poem. This is my first one so do not judge me.

WAR

As civil war is coming to a hold,
As the story of war is being told.
People like you and me,
Going through bad times and tragedy.
As the war is getting old,
Shall the truth be told.

You like my poem? I felt like I did a good job at my first crack at it. It will take me years to master it but at least I know what I am doing. Sorry bout your farm. Lucky you still have potatoes. I love mashed potatoes but never get them because the soldiers eat them.

Nice Talking To You!!

Yours Truly,

Lee and Abigale Earn

April 11, 1865

Dear Lee,

WHAT JUST HAPPENED TWO DAYS AGO!
Ok I need to calm down a bit. Whoa when I heard bout the war ending I was like a storm of craziness. So I heard that the union surrendered to the confederacy but I also heard that lots of lee's men were to be prisoners. So I had a celebration with yarn, (yarn had NO clue what was going on). The war might of been long and hard but I have this poem just for you.

Take Back The Light
In The Dark You Feel... Nothing
Your Blinded By Nothing
You Cant Escape Once You Go In
Its Not Easy In The Dark
You Live Out Of Nothing Except For Your Leader
The Only Light
He Tells You What To Do And When
And If You Fail Too Much You Will Become A
Dark Shadow
And You Will Spend The Rest Of Your Life In
Darkness
When Light Enfolds Everyone Stumbles Out
Able To Be Free Of What They've Been Through
To Take Back The Light

I made that poem in like 15 minutes but I like it and I hope you do to.

Hope to be seeing you for real sometime again.

Your Possum,

Hunter

FIGURE H

April 10, 1865

Greetings Hunter,

Finally, all my worries are over and the Earns are a happy family. What a blessing that the war is over. I can keep teaching my students. Sorry it took me so long to write to you. I just needed to take extra precautions with my family that has had unfortunate things happen to them. Do not want to make it worse. On the other hand, I made a lot of money off the poem. Enough to support the family. Snoop thinks I forgot about him because I am not giving him food but I am only doing that because he is getting very plump and often eats more than he should of our plates. Abigale is doing fine and we can go out of the house free without worrying about Graybacks because they are no longer. John is an adult now and is going to Harvard to learn business things.

It must be pretty boring up there in Michigan. I kind of went up north all the way to Chicago. I thought about what I would have done in the beginning of the war and I would have been so scared to go so far from my home with no one to help me. Abigale and John stayed home because they both wanted some alone time. In Chicago I got I newspaper because small towns only got exposed to so much. Also, with some of my extra earnings, I brought home a few knick-knacks and some good food and clothes.

I will not be writing to you for I do not know how long. So right here, right now, I want to say, farewell partner. It was nice talking to you.

Your biggest possums,

Lee, Abigale, John, and Snoop Earn

FIGURE I

WRITING CHALLENGES

It should be noted that not all students experienced such substantial writing development, as some struggled to formulate and tell a cohesive story. There were characters who remained at a standstill for several weeks and others for whom, rather than a story or journey unfolding, wrote letters which contained random bits of information, superfluous with slang terms that had no clear relevance to their lives. Another issue was the rapidity of transitions that occurred with no lead-up or clue that such a transition was coming. For example, “John,” a Southern general, suddenly became a spy, but then moved to Canada out of the blue, found his birth certificate, and learned that his name was not John at all, but “Stephen.” In the midst of all this, he mentioned getting dysentery and getting suddenly divorced and remarried. Most weeks, each letter took on a life of its own, and there was no scope or sequence to his story.

Conversely, some students created stories overly complex to the point where letters became somewhat fantastical and too convoluted to follow. For instance, “Bill” once lived as a Northern citizen concerned about the secession of Southern states just prior to the war. He then became a Union soldier, was promoted to the rank of general, and infiltrated the South as a spy. While in the South, he also became a Southern general and spy who was attempting to fight and spy for both sides during the same battle. It was not clear where he stood, and there were no clear motives behind his character’s actions.

INTERVENTIONS

In these instances, one-on-one interventions proved effective. We read through previous letters together,

during which I pointed out the inconsistencies and irrationalities of their character’s actions. Students were then given special graphic organizers in which they not only planned and mapped out their character’s story from week to week but also articulated the logic behind it. I required them to show me their graphic organizers each week and describe their plan prior to starting the next letter, and their writing did improve.

CONCLUSION

This project elicited comprehension that far exceeded anything I could have measured from review questions or chapter tests. It also sparked individual interests and independent research as students brought in books they had checked out at the library, and others conducted inquiry-based research on topics such as prison camp conditions, inflation, famous female spies, and soldier life off of the battlefield.

I am not suggesting that every student will remember everything s/he learned about the Civil War as a result of this pen pal project. When they are 40 years old and reflecting on their elementary school experiences, I don’t know if they will even remember it. What I do know, however, is that every week when it was time to write pen pal letters, not one child was bored. Nobody sat in rows reading textbook chapters and writing answers to review questions, and nobody copied notes from the board. They read maps, articles, authentic interviews, and Civil War diaries. They had discussions, they planned together, and they wrote together. Most importantly, they were motivated, and they were engaged. They were resurrecting and reliving history.

TEACHING AS A VOCATION

Submitted by Jennifer Groman

I am always interested in stories about how individuals were called into this profession. And I believe that teaching is a calling—a vocation—not simply a job.

The concept of vocation is often cited, but rarely explained. The root comes from the Middle Ages, where it was used to describe the “calling away” of man from productive activity in the world to dedicate himself to a life of prayer. At this time, a life of contemplation was held in higher regard than productivity, and there held a distinct separation of religious “calling” from worldly work.

From my own experiences traveling the abbeys of Scotland, I found that there were three levels of life surrounding the religious community: that of cloistered monk whose life was spent in contemplation, completely inside the abbey; that of lay-monk whose life was spent on the periphery of the abbey, working agonizingly long days in service of the abbey, making beer and bread, iron-mongering and such; the townspeople outside the abbey, whose lives were spent in full productivity for the world. I remember well the fact that the lay-monks often lived half the lifespan of those inside and outside the abbey, so difficult and so constant was their work. They literally worked themselves to death. My observations of those abbeys indicate a truly distinct separation of those called to a life of contemplation from those working for productivity. I wonder now where those unfortunate lay-monks fell on the scale of godliness and calling. Perhaps they felt a premature death was a reward for their lives of difficulty and exertion, calling them into the gates of heaven at an early age.

The Reformation brought a merging of prayerful and productive life. Divine calling stood on the same plane as nonreligious work and became part of personal fulfillment and human dignity. During the Industrial Revolution, the idea became more secular in meaning, as a career or occupation of paid work. Karl Marx posited that in the work we do and in the things we create we contemplate our own meaning. Max Weber, on the other hand, believed that vocation should be restored to a form of selfless service or devotion to some higher idea. He fought capitalistic definitions of work as financially motivated and believed that finding an individual calling was separate from working toward the accumulation of wealth.

Those of us in teaching are most definitely not motivated toward the accumulation of physical wealth. Those of you reading this have answered the higher call: being of service to a most vulnerable population, especially those students (and their families) with exceptional abilities. Many in our communities and legislative bodies believe that this population is not vulnerable at all and that meeting their needs borders on elitism. It is for this very reason they are vulnerable: because they are so misunderstood. So we spend our days toiling almost as hard as those lay-monks living on the edge of the abbey (although probably consuming beer rather than making it). We often make sacrifices of time to our students and we give away our creativity and energy because we feel we only have so much to offer.

Even when we are called into service, however, we must balance our lives. That means putting away the computer, the grading, the planning, and the angst of the third-period class that just didn’t get it today and making time and space for yourself.

I encourage you, as winter moves into spring, to keep an eye on one another for signs of burnout and stress. If a colleague appears alienated or less energized than usual, check in with her. If a teacher friend is angry or more sensitive than usual, brave an emotional outburst aimed at you, ask how things are going, and truly listen to his reply. Take a short walk at lunch with a colleague, tell someone you think they are rocking that hairdo and that you see how hard they work taking graduate classes as well as working full time, ask to see pictures of the family, dream together of where you want to go on your summer break—even if it is just a staycation.

In the half-lives of those lay-monks there are infinite lessons for living. The most meaningful to me today is that constant toil will excise its tax on the quantity and quality of our days. Give yourself time to relax, recharge, renew, and remember that a calling requires love and compassion, for that teacher across the hall as well as the one in the mirror.

Jennifer Groman has been in gifted education for 23 years, with special interests in creativity theory, transpersonal psychology, and teacher growth. She directs the talent development program at Ashland University and lives in Wooster, where she periodically enjoys a Scottish ale.

SHANGHAI AND BEIJING

TWO WINTER GIFTED CAMP STORIES FROM TWO GIFTED INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS

by Tracy Alley and Todd Stanley

DILIGENCE and Delight Learning Centers (DDC) in Beijing, China, operate summer and winter gifted camps for students in 1st through 8th grade in Beijing and Shanghai. The DDC has been a vendor at many NAGC conventions recruiting highly qualified gifted intervention specialists to teach gifted Chinese students in a wide variety of courses. Shelagh Gallagher, daughter of famed gifted researcher and advocate, James Gallagher, is the U.S. liaison and works through Engaged Education to help recruit teachers from the United States and Australia.

Two teachers from Ohio took upon the challenge to teach highly gifted Chinese students in December 2019—Tracy Alley and Todd Stanley. Here are their stories...

DR. TRACY ALLEY – SHANGHAI – DEC. 27TH–JAN. 3RD

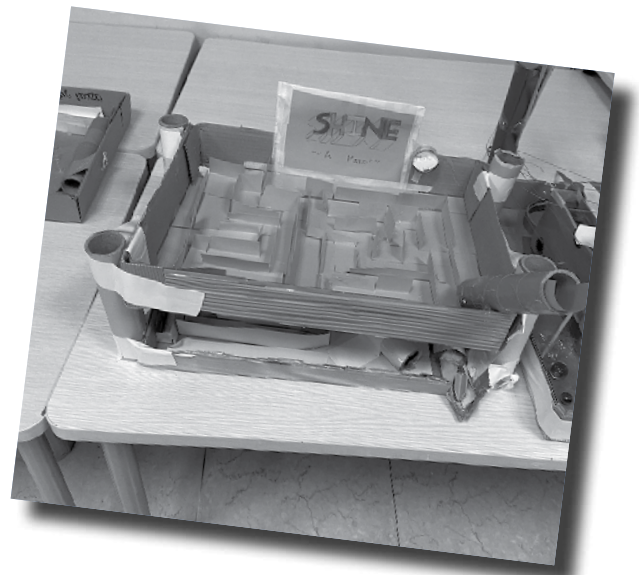
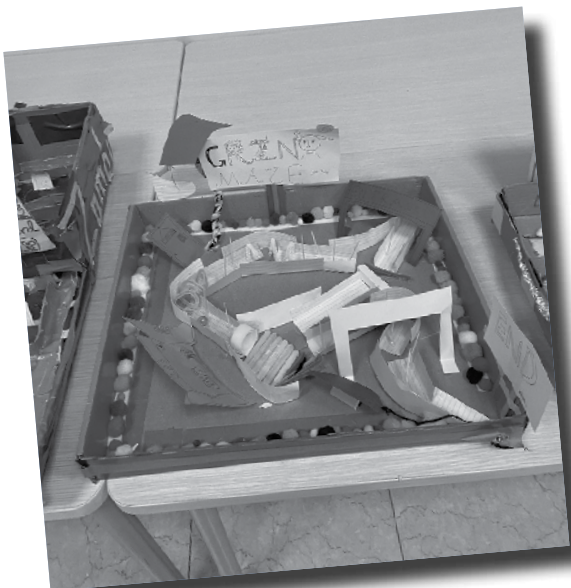
I started to prepare for my Shanghai winter gifted camp in late August, when I received notice that I was accepted. My campsite was the British International School in Shanghai, since the school would be on winter break.

I created a 4th and 5th grade unit focusing on algebra and mazes loosely based on the Interact simulation titled “Algebra Mystery Maze.” I added layers to the unit and deleted the sections that involved designing paper mazes. It was a cross-curricular unit covering geography, history, language arts, technology, art, engineering, and math. The variety of subjects and content helped add depth and

complexity to the algebra unit. I included picture books about famous mazes around the world, challenging paper/pencil mazes to conquer, and fun shape mazes like USA-shaped mazes. Students played the 24 Game, Mobi, Algebra Bingo, Proof, and other games to stay challenged during the camp. Since the day consisted of six hours of instruction on the same topic over a seven-day period (including weekends), the course needed many layers to keep students engaged.

Throughout the week, we focused on PEMDAS: Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, and Subtraction. On the first day, students dressed in lab coats and acted out an order of operations play with characters like “Dr. Dee Division,” “Dr. Pear N. Theses,” and Dr. X Ponent.” They struggled with the word play at times, but they laughed and enjoyed the experience. We ended up performing it three times. One time was for the parents at the closing ceremony. There were some future thespians in the group of twelve—11 boys and 1 girl.

Students spoke fluent English. They had been taught English in school beginning in kindergarten. During the DDC camp, students were required to speak and write only English to help improve their speaking and writing skills. Every teacher had a teaching assistant to help bridge language barriers and assist with lunch and recess duties.



Our days were filled with a variety of maze work and algebraic challenges. I added the construction of a cardboard marble maze inspired by the YouTube videos “Caine’s Arcade” and “Audri’s Rube Goldberg.” Students were “paid” using play American money depending on the speed and accuracy of solving math challenges. Students kept a budget sheet and purchased items at the “Maze Store.” The Maze Store consisted of items such as cardboard lids, shoeboxes, tubes, tape, pipe cleaners, glue, marbles, magnets, construction paper, duct tape, and much more. Students needed to construct a cardboard marble maze using only supplies purchased from the maze store to encourage creativity and ingenuity.

We ended our week with edible equations, designing our own icing colors and naming them, edible pretzel mazes, and playing with all the cardboard marble maze creations. Students enjoyed the wide variety of engaging activities and found new snacks they had never tasted.

Throughout the week, it was fun for students to ask me questions about the USA, and in turn, I asked them lots of questions about life and school experiences in Shanghai. (An interesting fact: Shanghai has approximately 24 million people, while the entire state of Ohio has approximately 12 million.) Every evening after school, we explored a new area and new restaurant. Everyone was very welcoming and kind. I have traveled around the world, and it was one of the cleanest and friendliest countries I have ever visited.

The DDC staff were highly professional, organized, and caring. It was an enormous amount of work preparing detailed lesson plans and a syllabus months in advance for the DDC staff and parents to view. Also, I had to prepare a video on WeChat to promote my course, since it was a new camp offering. Overall, the experience was truly amazing, albeit exhausting. The kids were high energy due to the camp atmosphere!

During the seven-day teaching adventure, we had only one day of vacation—New Year’s Day. I was able to visit the top of the Shanghai Tower—118 floors—in 55 seconds. The Shanghai Tower is the second tallest building in the world, has the fastest elevator in the world, and has the tallest observation floor in the world. Plus, I was able to walk the Bund (historic waterfront area) while enjoying a Starbucks drink. I ate at two famous restaurants (Lost Heaven and Yang’s Dumplings) and visited Wuzhen, one of the historic water towns, to see traditional Chinese living.

Thankfully, I avoided the coronavirus outbreak. It was truly a wonderful experience to teach and connect with professionals in gifted education from across the United States in such places as New Mexico, Florida, and Minnesota as well as from Australia and China. I highly recommend the teaching and cultural experience.



TODD STANLEY – BEIJING – DEC. 21ST–27TH

I had little to no time to prepare for my Beijing winter gifted camp. While most folks had been hired in the summer and had months to play with the DDC’s already established curriculum, I applied on a Wednesday in mid-November, interviewed that Friday, and was given the job on Monday of the following week. This gave me three weeks until I left for Beijing, with most of that spent trying to procure my visa in addition to reading the book I would be teaching while trying to do my full-time job.

I was going to be teaching an academic writing class. The curriculum called for students to read *The Invisible Man* during our seven days together and to write two formal essays concerning the book. They also had to learn numerous root words and create a project at the end. Keep



in mind, although my students would speak English, it was not their native language. It would be challenging enough to teach this class to American 5th and 6th graders, much less in a week. The degree of difficulty was going to be very high. One thing I have learned over the years is that already-made curriculum is fine if you can put your own spin on it and make it your own, but simply following someone's curriculum verbatim is like following a sub plan left by the teacher. But I really did not have the time to go through the 413 pages of curriculum (no that is not a typo) and make changes that would suit my teaching style beforehand.

I arrived in China, and it was just as you would think: most of the signs were in a language I did not recognize, the nice folks at the hotel did not speak English, and the food was not something I was used to. Not to mention I was away from my family during the Christmas holidays. The DDC staff did a wonderful job of making sure you got what you needed, but sometimes you were just on your own. I found myself outside my comfort zone on many occasions, which is exactly the reason I took on this endeavor.

We were warned ahead of time that given the vast time difference (13 hours ahead), we should expect to be tired after the first day of teaching. What I hadn't taken into account was that I would have the same students from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the same class with minimal breaks for seven days straight. I was working Sunday to Saturday, one of those days being Christmas Day. Unfortunately, I had a touch of the flu. I finished my first day with students and went back to the hotel. I laid down at 5:30 p.m., hoping just to rest for a moment. I woke up at 3:00 a.m.

This was my schedule for most of the trip, being asleep by 10:00 p.m., waking at 4:00 a.m., and adjusting the curriculum for the few hours before we needed to be at the school.



I'm not sure it was everyone's schedule, but I needed to do this to feel comfortable going into the classroom and to be confident in what I was teaching. I did venture out a time or two in the evenings. We had a great cohort of teachers from all over the U.S. and one was even from Australia. We went out for Christmas dinner, checked out the pearl market, and took a trip to a section of the Great Wall.

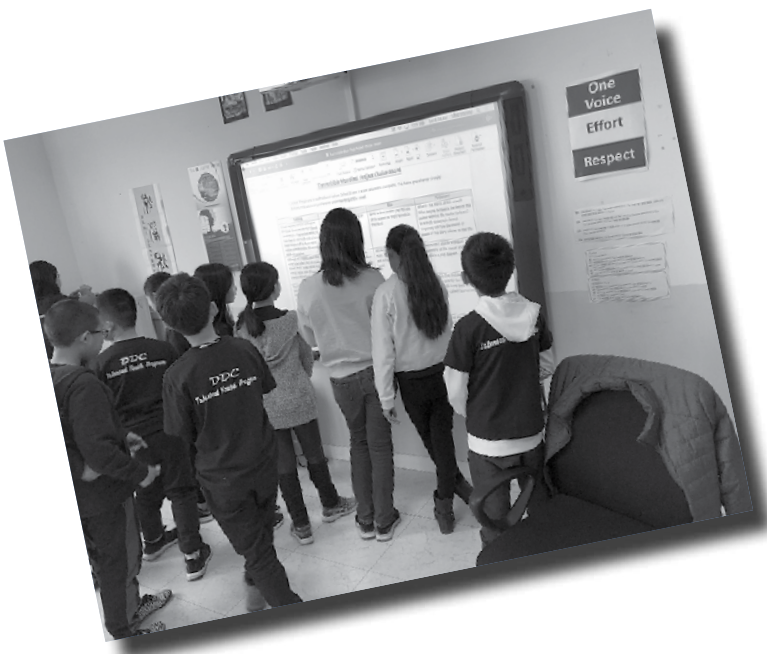
For all of the unfamiliarity surrounding me, the classroom was my place of refuge. It was a place I felt comfortable and even though English was not their primary language, the kids acted like any other 5th and 6th graders would. The teaching was the most universal and least foreign part of the trip for me. Trying to challenge kids translates very well, no matter what the culture.

Although it was a very tiring trip, it was an amazing experience. For the first time, I got to be immersed in a country where I did not speak the native language. I got to work with 17 kids who although they were a little squirrely at times, were really bright and fun to learn with. The DDC did a great job of making you feel valued and they respected your expertise. In the end, the experience broadened my perspective and made me want to go back again.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Tracy Alley is a gifted intervention specialist and gifted coordinator for Madeira City Schools in Cincinnati. Also, she is an adjunct professor for the University of Cincinnati and Xavier University.

Todd Stanley is the author of many teacher education books. He served as a classroom teacher for 18 years and is currently the gifted services coordinator for Pickerington Local Schools as well as an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati. You can follow him on Twitter @the_gifted_guy or visit his Web site at thegiftedguy.com.



CURRICULUM COMPACTION

More Than Meets the Eye

Submitted by Tara Toft

STEPHEN Covey says we must “begin with the end in mind” (2008). Truer words were never spoken for many applications, but especially when it comes to planning high-quality educational opportunities for our students. Proper curriculum compaction must be purposeful.

When we compact curricula, we might do it for a variety of reasons. Perhaps we have one learner so advanced that his current path offers him little to no growth potential. Maybe some of our students are ahead of their same-age peers, and differentiating in the classroom just isn’t providing enough of a challenge for them. But our children deserve much more forethought and careful planning than simply pushing them through a predetermined sequence of classes.

Curriculum compacting is more than just moving through curricula at a faster pace. It requires in-depth understanding of grade-level standards as well as above-grade-level standards in order to maximize the momentum of learning. When we look at language arts curriculum, for example, phrases and clauses show up in grade 7. We might introduce phrases and clauses in 6th grade as a way to begin compacting. Offering opportunities to learn and apply advanced vocabulary and elaboration strategies also propels learners along their journey. Consider creating rubrics with an advanced-level category to remove the ceiling in achievement expectations and grading practices. Another example might be found in science. Water quality is part of the grade 5 standards in Ohio. If we introduce chemistry as related to the testing of water quality, we have a route to advanced understanding of some 7th grade content.

Both vertical and horizontal alignment among courses are important aspects of developing a comprehensive compacted curriculum. The compaction of the standards within and above a grade level is critical. Many skill progressions contained in the state standards include subtle nuances as we move from one year to another. Collaboration with peers and calibrating the

understanding and application of these nuances within scoring rubrics help teachers provide students with valuable feedback that effect positive change in skill and achievement.

The real goal of curriculum compaction is to prepare our students for success at every step along an educational journey that leads them to destinations and goals they themselves define. When our students trek through typical curricular paths at a faster rate than peers where do they go when they reach the end? Do they begin College Credit Plus courses? Do they enroll in Advanced Placement coursework? Is one of those options better than the other? Recall what Stephen Covey tells us about beginning with the end in mind. Why not ask the students exactly where they would like to end up and prepare them for a successful trip?

If a student is college bound, then we might assume that College Credit Plus courses are the best next step. If a student is planning to attend a local college or other university that will accept all of their College Credit Plus courses, then College Credit Plus makes as much sense as Advanced Placement. However, if she has her sights set on a more prestigious university, it is possible that many of her college credit plus courses may not be accepted. In her case it may make sense to exhaust all the Advanced Placement options she can because Advanced Placement credit is accepted in universities across the nation.

Ultimately, as educators it is our job to prepare our students for the rest of their lives, which will undoubtedly include careers that have yet to be invented. How do we do that? We prepare them with critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and communication skills that will carry them through the vast futures they have ahead of them.

Covey, S. (2008). *7 Habits of Happy Kids*. Simon & Schuster.

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“We aim
above the
mark to hit the
mark.”

—Ralph Waldo
Emerson

“Prepare
the child for
the path, not
the path for the
child.”

—Native
American
proverb

HIGH, DEEP, AND WIDE

Planning for Differentiation in the Gifted Classroom

Submitted by Dawn M. Harris

FOR those of us who have taught gifted students, whether in a fully inclusive classroom or in a standalone gifted classroom, there is no question, teaching gifted children can be as challenging as it can be joyous. Gifted children bring with them an abundance of characteristics and experiences which can both help and hinder them as they participate in learning within our classrooms. From twice-exceptional students to subject and grade-level accelerated students, children in the gifted classroom are often as different as night and day. Some arrive bright-eyed and ready to learn, while others will have a difficult time staying awake or focused, preventing any learning from occurring at all. Some learn easily and achieve rapidly, while others struggle emotionally, refusing to work and resisting classroom processes and routines. As gifted education specialists, it is imperative that we find ways, just as our fully inclusive teaching peers do, to differentiate for our gifted students, too.

THE NEEDS OF GIFTED CHILDREN

Sometimes, folks outside the realm of gifted education possess a false belief that teaching gifted students is easy, that all gifted kids will pass the test or achieve faster and greater than their nonidentified peers. Some of the more common myths that gifted educators must contend with are the ideas that all gifted children will make straight As or that they can achieve without solid guidance from their teacher (OAGC, 2013). These myths are not only untrue, but educators who approach teaching gifted children with these kinds of misunderstandings will soon find themselves among groups of students who are unresponsive in their struggle to learn. Gifted children who don't get the support they need via tailored learning experiences will more than likely neglect their classroom responsibilities and may eventually abandon the desire to learn altogether. All gifted children need an education that is appropriate to their individual needs—one that involves guidance and support and that stimulates their love for education.

Whether we find ourselves teaching in self-contained gifted classrooms or in a fully inclusive setting, gifted students need to be offered creative outlets in which they can demonstrate their understanding of complex ideas and skills. Gifted teaching specialists should provide their students with opportunities to learn through exploration and

to engage in higher-order thinking with one another, as often as possible. Gifted students should not be punished with more work because they perform at an accelerated rate but instead, should be given opportunities that challenge and support them within the context of the curriculum (OAGC, 2013). This kind of planning can be a daunting task, and it is this challenge that gifted educators face each day they walk into a classroom of students with superior intellectual abilities. So, how is it possible for us to do all of these things for our gifted students and still survive as educators? The answer lies in *planning high*, *planning deep*, and *planning wide*.

PLANNING HIGH

In their book *Understanding by Design* (1998) Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe suggest three essential steps to designing solid learning plans for students:

1. **Identify desired results** by using informative data to determine learning targets,
2. **Determine acceptable evidence** by developing measurement and assessment tools to monitor student progress towards goals, and
3. **Plan learning experiences and instruction** by filling in the gaps between assessment with tiered lessons (pp. 2–11).

The basic concept that Wiggins and McTighe put forth in their work is the idea that planning should be designed in a backward fashion, beginning with the end in mind. When we plan this way, the entry point for building solid classroom instructional plans—identifying the desired end results—is key to student growth, and is exactly where the act of *planning high* begins. Too often though, teachers want to begin instructional planning around a central topic, a resource, or even an idea. While these things can and should be included in the instructional design process, they alone should not be at its center (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Instead, when designing learning segments, teachers should open the exploration of learning topics by analyzing the collected data that tell us who our students are, what they know, and what they are capable of accomplishing. In addition to informative assessment results, teachers of gifted students must consider their students' educational needs and abilities or disabilities; their

interests; and their cultural backgrounds and personal experiences. And while gifted teachers need to have a clear understanding of individual students' learning traits, they also need a sufficient amount of formal assessment data to help them substantiate the need for a planned learning segment. This means having authentic assessment results that support the goals the lesson or unit will cover.

When educators begin planning by looking at both academic assessment data and individual student data, identifying learning targets might seem simple; however, Carol Ann Tomlinson encourages teachers to take aim at the highest performing and most challenging students when setting goals for learning. She suggests that instead of planning for midrange learners, and then differentiating up for high-end learners, teachers should structure goals and lessons that meet the needs of high-end learners first. In planning this way, teachers no longer have to inflate middle-level targets in order to meet the needs of their highest-achieving learners (Azzam, 2016). Later, when we begin to identify assessment methods and plan for learning, steps two and three of Wiggins and McTighe's Backward Design method, teachers can then tailor instruction by tiering lessons with sound, differentiated teaching practices that will help guide a variety of gifted students towards mastery. When we begin with the end in mind and plan high, gifted educators should be able to easily answer "yes" to the question, *once differentiated, will the planned learning meet the needs of all students, including my highest?*

Planning high is not always easy at first, and we may feel a sense of intimidation about using our highest achievers as the baseline upon which we build goals for lower-level performers. But in reality, this is a much more strategic way of addressing the needs of all gifted students. Setting the bar high means we have left room for ourselves to modify goals to meet the needs of students who may struggle, because we can adjust entry and exit points for all learners, from top to bottom. When educators get to the actual designing of individual lessons and activities, they may need to spend a little more time there; but in the end, teachers will have refined goals, activities, and assessments for all students, and an abundance of time will be freed up for support during instruction and assessment.

PLANNING DEEP

Once educators have utilized student data to determine the scope of their highest level of gifted learners and established where they wish for learning to end, they must next consider the complexity of the activities in which they are asking students to engage. Yes, learning targets must be data-driven, but learning targets must also provide the opportunity for students to complete tasks that push their levels of thinking. Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) provides the model

necessary to scaffold tasks and learning segments based on a spiraling curriculum steeped in the advancement of critical thinking skills. Webb's DOK begins with simple tasks involving recollection and reproduction through extensive, critical thinking tasks that require students eventually to transform the knowledge they have acquired into something entirely brand new. This is *planning deep*.

Webb's Depth of Knowledge

In the simplest terms, Depth of Knowledge provides teachers with a framework for analyzing how critically a particular lesson, activity, or goal requires a student to think. DOK asks teachers to pay attention to the level of analysis involved in any type of goal or activity to ensure they are setting rigorous standards for learning in their classroom.

Erick Francis of Maverick Education (2018) encourages educators to maintain a focus on context when using Webb's model to develop learning goals for their students. His DOK Ceilings chart (<https://maverikeducation.com/d-o-k-training>) provides clarity on how to use DOK questioning to construct learning objectives that involve higher-order thinking *and* that are tied directly to instructional content and standards. These questions are critical when framing student learning objectives so that educators are sure to have the right level of rigor within the context of the content for each DOK level. Francis divides the instructional focus of Depth of Knowledge levels into four distinct categories:

1. DOK 1 - What is the knowledge?
2. DOK 2 - How can the knowledge be used?
3. DOK 3 - How and why could the knowledge be used?
4. DOK 4 - How else could you use the knowledge?

By considering these four questions when planning, rigor is established even at the lowest level, and when properly utilized, DOK targets become meaty and challenging, consisting of far more than a few simple verb-based stems. Deeper teaching and learning experiences will engage students to demonstrate higher levels of thinking up to and beyond the ceiling of assessment (Francis, 2018).

With rigor at the core of Depth of Knowledge, educators must be careful not to forego Webb's Depth of Knowledge for Bloom's Taxonomy. While Bloom's verbs are great for classifying learning at different levels, they should not be used in isolation, but rather, in tandem with DOK when developing learning targets. To put it another way, educators can use Bloom's verbs to guide what happens at each level of learning and DOK as a method to encourage deeper thinking during that learning (Bray). Following this idea, the development of learning objectives becomes a simple formula: Bloom's covers the *doing* portion of the learning objective, while DOK covers the *thinking* portion of the objective.

Using a template, educators can create tailored learning objectives simply by filling in the blanks with content-specific verb/thinking/mastery combinations:

Student(s) will Bloom’s (do) in which they DOK (think higher) by (demonstrating mastery).

For example,

Students will analyze stories in Greek Mythology (Bloom’s) in which they synthesize ideas and interpret themes (DOK) by constructing an evidence-based, informative essay that explains how Greek Mythology helped ancient people to answer the questions that mystified them. (Mastery).

For further help with *deep* planning, Karen Hess’s Cognitive Rigor Matrices/CRMs (2014) demonstrate how DOK works as an extension of Bloom’s Taxonomy when constructing learning targets that focus on both concepts *and* skills in context. On her Web site, www.karin-hess.com/cognitive-rigor-and-dok, you can find a variety of downloadable CRMs to support your planning:

Close Reading
Math-Science
Written and Oral Communication
Social Studies and Humanities
Fine Arts
Health & Physical Education
World Languages
Career & Technical Education

PLANNING WIDE

It took a few arduous years of teaching gifted students before I realized that I was going to have to do something different—something better—if I was going to reach my entire gifted student population. I knew there were students I was missing in my instruction, and it was hurting them *and* me. I had no problem grasping the concept of using data to formulate learning targets, but I hadn’t at all been planning high. Even when I did begin setting my learning targets higher and developing deep, rigorous lessons, I still felt I was missing the mark with some students. I felt good about the goals I had developed; however, my instruction felt chaotic. As I attempted to differentiate, I was flying by the seat of my pants, trying to accommodate every learner from one moment to the next. I was working ten times harder than my students and it was taking a toll on my performance as an educator.

Finally in 2018, I was introduced to Chad Ostrowski’s “Grid Method” (2014) during a local ESC workshop. This planning method quickly became the solution that would turn my gifted *and* inclusion classrooms on their heads, al-

lowing students to enter and exit learning at levels appropriate to their needs and allowing me to keep my sanity. It was tough planning—messy, at times—and a lot of up-front work; but in the end, using the Grid Method would give every student in my classroom access to learning whenever and wherever they were ready for it. I had finally learned to *plan wide*.

Mastery Grids

The Grid Method (Ostrowski, 2014) is a planning strategy that allows educators to build tiered learning segments right into their units. Mastery grids provide structure to students as they work through a series of tasks, upon the completion of which, they will be able to show mastery on the standards-based objectives teachers create. A key element of the Grid Method is that all activities in the grids that teachers design will spiral, building one upon the other until students advance to the final mastery target. Throughout a grid, students may progress to the next level of learning and thinking only when they have demonstrated mastery of the targets within each Depth of Knowledge level, as these DOK levels are the foundational pillars of any grid. What makes the grid extremely useful is that in addition to allowing for high learning targets and deep levels of thinking, teachers can also plan for a wide array of learners. For instance, where one student enters into learning on a Mastery Grid may not be the same as when his or her peers do, nor will they progress through grid activities at the same pace. This idea follows the concept of Stanford professor Jo Boaler’s concept of “low floor/high ceiling” tasks for math instruction. Incorporating this concept into the Grid Method means that students are challenged by being able to access information and solve problems in different ways than their peers do (Donald, 2015). The idea of lowering floors and raising ceilings is at the heart of differentiation and pairs perfectly with the Grid Method as a planning tool for gifted educators. Here are a few things to consider when creating Mastery Grids for gifted learners:

- While grids are standards-based, they do not have to be utilized with standards-based grading (SBG). There are some elements of planning that are similar to SBG, but the Grid Method is much easier to develop and implement, and in my opinion, grids allow for much simpler tracking of assessment data than standards-based grading.
- I create my planning grids from top to bottom, as opposed to the method designed by Ostrowski. For example, I build rows starting with the lowest DOK level at the top of each grid, and students work down to the highest DOK level at the bottom row (see figures 1.a. & 1.b.). At the end of each DOK row on a Mastery Grid, students will have reached the ceiling for that level and can proceed to the next level after they have demonstrated a mastery level of at least 85% (OAGC, 2013). Structuring grids in this way is purely my preference, and I cannot say that it has had any bearing on my successes with the Grid Method.


UNDERSTANDING GREEK MYTHOLOGY w/ EVIDENCE-BASED WRITING (English, Gr.10)				
Mastery Target	Students will analyze stories in Greek Mythology in which they synthesize ideas and interpret themes by constructing an evidence-based, informative essay that explains how Greek Mythology helped ancient people to answer the questions that mystified them.			
BEGIN HERE!!  Recalling (DOK1): What is the Knowledge?	OLS.L.9-10.4c; L.9-10.6 Generate a Quizlet Vocabulary Set. Name it "Greek Mythology Unit - Academic Vocabulary Words" (1) or Take Quiz - 85% needed to progress. Resources: Chromebook; Vocab list; Quizlet.com	OLS.L.9-10.4c; L.9-10.6 Generate another Quizlet Vocabulary Set. Name it "My Greek Mythology Vocabulary Words" (2) (this will be an ongoing assignment - at least 10 content-specific vocabulary words) Resources: Chromebook; Quizlet.com	OLS.W.9-10.6 Introduction to Big Q. #1 Examine the Greek Mythology Family Tree and re-construct a family tree that includes only Zeus and his immediate family (3) **Add Vocab to List 2 Resources: Google Classroom; Greek Mythology Family Tree Links; Post-it notes; Paper; Pencil or Pen	OLS.RI.9-10.3 Group Reading & Discussion: Introduction to Greek Mythology; Mother Earth & her Children; Zeus & the Creation of Mankind (4) **Add Vocab to List 2 Resources: Class Text: <i>Myths and Legends from Ancient Greece and Around the World</i>
	When you have mastered all of DOK 1, move to this level. Skills/Concepts (DOK 2): How can this Knowledge be used?	OLS.RI.9-10.2b Commonlit.org reading activities: Chiron, The Wisest Centaur & The Story of Prometheus and Pandora's Box (5) **Add Vocab to List 2 Take Assessments - 85% needed to progress. Resources: Chromebook; commonlit.org	OLS.W.9-10.2b, 2e Introduction to Big Q. #2 Intro to Cornell Note Taking - Complete, teacher-led, for Chiron & Pandora or OYO, if familiar. (6) **Add Vocab to List 2 Resources: Chromebook; commonlit.org; Cornell Notes Graphic Organizer	OLS.W.9-10.2b, 2e Cornell Notes, whole group: Zeus & the Creation of Mankind (7) **Add Vocab to List 2 Introduction to CER Short Answer Responses Quiz: 85% needed to progress. Resources: Class Text: <i>Myths and Legends from Ancient</i>

FIGURE 1.A

			<i>Greece and Around the World</i>	
When you have mastered all of DOK 2, move to the activities at this level. Strategic Thinking (DOK 3): Why can this knowledge be used?	OLS.W.9-10.2b, 2e Cornell Notes: Perseus (9) Focus on direct citation in notes; location indicators Resources: Family Tree; Class Text; Cornell Notes;	OLS.W.9-10.2b, 2e Cornell Notes: Student Choice (10) Focus on paraphrasing in notes; location indicators Resources: Family Tree; Class Text; Cornell Notes;	OLS.W.9-10.1b, 1c, 1d Clash of the Titans Film Segments Analysis (11) 2 CER responses (1-2 paragraphs each): • Cite directly one variation between the film version of Perseus compared to the class text. • Paraphrase what the film version of Perseus helps us to understand about Big Q #1. 85% needed to progress. Resources: Perseus/Choice Cornell Notes; ThinkCERCA; Chromebook; Film Clips; Film Script	
All DOK 1, 2, and 3, activities must be mastered before moving to this level. Extended Thinking (DOK 4): How else can this knowledge be used?	OLS.W.9-10.2a-g PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (12a) Write a 5-paragraph informative essay that answers BIG Question #2. Use both direct citations and paraphrasing from all unit content that supports your claim with evidence and sound reasoning. Include both academic and content-related vocabulary. Resources: ALL Cornell Notes; Class Text; Commonlit.org; Quizlet.com; Film Clips; Film Script; ThinkCERCA Main Idea Graphic Organizer; ThinkCERCA 5-Paragraph Outline template; Chromebook;		OLS.SL.9-10.2; SL.9-10.5 CREATIVE PROJECT (12b) Redesign Zeus's Family Tree Together with a group, utilize all unit content to design a new, more complex, family tree for Zeus based on the knowledge you have acquired throughout this unit. The new version of Zeus's family tree can take on any creative form you choose including digital, interactive, three-dimensional, or any other appropriate format. Resources: ALL Cornell Notes; Class Text; Commonlit.org; Quizlet.com; Film Clips; Film Script	
Enrichment: How can I connect this knowledge to something I am passionate about?	OLS.W.9-10.7 Students may begin enrichment project after structured activities have been completed and student has demonstrated proficiency on all formative and summative assessments in DOK levels 1-4 Genius Badge: SOLE: How does Greek Mythology tie to things you are passionate about? PSA: Why should Greek Mythology be considered important to others?			

FIGURE 1.B

- Last, learning targets should be spread out within the grid, with final mastery learning targets embedded at the end of each grid. Each of the learning objectives in your grids should contain both Bloom's Taxonomy verbs *and* DOK stems. It is up to you whether you include the learning targets on your grid. Some educators do. I usually provide students with a list of essential questions (figure 2) from which they can formulate their own learning targets at the start of each new grid square.

Essential Questions
<u>Academic Questions</u>
<u>Squares 1 & 2:</u> How can I use vocabulary and details from my reading to help me better understand a text or passage?
<u>Squares 3 & 4:</u> How can I collect relevant details while I am reading that will help me to support my ideas during a discussion?
<u>Squares 3-7:</u> How can I explore a variety of texts to discover a multitude of answers to a complex question?
<u>Squares 3, 8 & 12:</u> How can I use evidence differently, either directly or by paraphrasing, to support my ideas in my writing?
<u>Squares 8, 11, & 12:</u> How can I turn text-based details into evidence that will support my claims in my writing?
<u>Square 11:</u> How can I compare what I read with what I see in film to formulate answers to our big question?
<u>Square 12a:</u> How can I use all of what I have learned to formulate my own independent ideas about a text and support my claim with relevant evidence and sound reasoning?
<u>Square 12b:</u> How can I use all of what I have learned to create and construct something new in an original way?
<u>BIG Questions</u>
<u>Squares 3-8:</u> In what ways does Zeus's family represent complex relationships, and what are the consequences of those relationships?
<u>Squares 4-12a:</u> How did Greek Mythology help ancient people to understand unexplainable events as they occurred in ancient times?

FIGURE 2

Keep in mind, the Grid Method does *not* replace carefully designed lesson plans. Lesson plans still need to be created and facilitated as often as necessary. What the Grid Method does allow, however, is for teachers to construct learning segments within a unit that involve tiered lessons, curriculum compacting, independent self-study, grouping, and even enrichment (NAGC). A well-designed grid can include a multitude of teaching strategies, such as choice boards, flipped classroom techniques, Hyperdocs, and other tech-based learning programs, as well as traditional and direct instructional methods. The beauty of the grid is that a teacher can input as many differentiated lesson segments as necessary to support a wide range of learners, and those learners can progress at a pace suitable to their needs.

I would like to underscore again that managing lesson planning using grids involves a significant amount of frontloading, but the end result is a free-flowing, student-led unit that lowers floors and raises ceilings so all learners have the chance to demonstrate mastery. Once you have designed a grid, it can be used year after year with only minor adjustments. Creating grids in Google Docs offers an added bonus, in that they can serve as a one-stop shop which includes hyperlinks to all class materials and lesson planning resources. Designing grids that you are able to share with students digitally can also free up more time for you to act as your students' guide through the learning process, as opposed to your spending unnecessary time managing it. The grid then becomes student-led, making learning far more dynamic.

WHY WE MUST PLAN HIGH AND DEEP AND WIDE

When we don't differentiate for our gifted learners and instead make assumptions about their ability to learn without structured support, we do them a great disservice. When we don't provide them with individualized learning experiences in our classrooms, we limit their potential, denying them the opportunity to achieve greater things. Gifted children crave learning experiences that challenge them but that also allow them to witness their own growth. Unless we provide our gifted learners with a level of engagement and rigor that keeps them eagerly pursuing knowledge, we may lose them and never get them back. Gifted educators must set targets high and must plan broad learning experiences

that go well beyond basic levels of thinking. When we design learning in this way, our gifted students will thank us. They will come to us with excitement and enthusiasm, and they will never forget the classroom we designed for each and every one of them, individually, *because* we planned high, we planned deep, and we planned wide.

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DISTINGUISHED STUDENT Award Scholarship



DUE JUNE 1, 2020

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- Ohio students who are finishing up the current school-year in grades 3, 4, 5, or 6 and have been identified as gifted or talented according to OAC 3301-51-15 in one or more areas: Cognitive Ability, Specific Academic Ability, Visual/Performing Arts, Creative Thinking
- Applicants must demonstrate excellence in one or more of the following areas: visual or performing arts, academic achievement, or leadership
- The OAGC will accept self-nominations and nominations from parents, teachers, students, and community or civic groups

HOW DOES A STUDENT APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP?

- An application is available online at www.oagc.com. All materials are available in a fillable PDF format.
- Applications must include ALL of the required materials. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
- Each applicant must submit **two letters of recommendation** from any of the following:
 - Educational Recommendation – teacher, principal, guidance counselor, or other who knows the student in an academic capacity
 - Civic Recommendation – Church leader, 4-H leader, leader of a group in which the student actively volunteers, or other community member who has directly worked with the student
 - Personal Recommendation – Anyone that has known the student for at least one year and is **not** a family member

APPLICATION SUBMISSION/POSTMARK DEADLINE: JUNE 1, 2020

Submit materials electronically to: Alesha.Haybin.OAGC@gmail.com	Mail a paper copy of materials to: Ohio Association for Gifted Children Scholarship Committee PO Box 30801 Gahanna, Ohio 43230
*You will receive confirmation of materials received as a reply to the email address that submitted materials	*You will NOT receive confirmation of receipt unless you include a self-addressed, stamped envelope *Do not send materials via registered or certified mail *Materials in the application packet will not be returned to you

REQUIRED MATERIALS: Applications Must Include ALL of the Following at the Time of Submission

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant Information Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Current Photo of the Student
<input type="checkbox"/> OAGC Member Nominator Form
<input type="checkbox"/> District Contact & Eligibility Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Letter of Recommendation and Form #1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter of Recommendation and Form #2
<input type="checkbox"/> Activities/Awards Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Essay Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Essay |
|--|---|

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD PROCEDURE

- Applications will be reviewed by a committee consisting of the Scholarship Chair, OAGC Parent, OAGC Executive Board Member, and OAGC Regional Representative
- The award recipient will receive a \$1000 scholarship and Certificate of Excellence from the OAGC
- Applicants will be notified within 45 days of the Scholarship application deadline whether or not they were selected to receive this award Scholarship
- Scholarship awards will be made payable directly to the student

QUESTIONS?

Contact Alesha Haybin - OAGC Scholarship Committee Chair
Alesha.Haybin.OAGC@gmail.com

Updated: 8/25/19

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www.oagc.com/scholarship.asp

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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- April 15 College Scholarship Award (\$500)
- June 1 Distinguished Student Scholarship Award (\$1000)
- November 15 Susan Faulkner Student Arts Scholarship Award (grade-level tiers: K-4 \$150, 5-8 \$250, 9-12 \$350)

TIMELINE

- Applicants will be notified within 45 days of the scholarship deadline whether or not they were selected to receive a scholarship
- School districts will be notified within 45 days of the scholarship application deadline

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

- Scholarship Committee decisions are final
- Not all applicants for OAGC scholarship awards will be selected
- Uncashed scholarship checks will be considered null and void 180 days after the date of issue

Student Scholarship & Susan Faulkner Student Arts Scholarship Award

- Award checks will be made out directly to the program or activity, not to the student or their family
- Checks issued to one program are non-transferrable (to a different program)
- Notification of awards may fall AFTER a deadline for registration and/or payment required by a particular program or activity. OAGC will not adjust award notification to meet individual submission deadlines. It is our recommendation that you contact those in charge of registration ahead of their deadline to get further instructions. Most programs will reimburse you for the amount of the awarded scholarship but you will typically have to submit the required payment first to guarantee placement in the program your child wishes to attend.
- OAGC is not responsible for any registration fees submitted and does not guarantee that your child will receive a scholarship
- Scholarship awards may not be used to provide ongoing lessons

College Scholarship & Distinguished Student Award Scholarship

- This is a one-time award, so once a student has received the OAGC College Scholarship or Distinguished Student Award Scholarship they are not eligible to apply again for the same scholarship
- Scholarship awards will be made payable directly to the student

SUBMISSION

- Submit materials to the OAGC Scholarship Chair: Alesha.Haybin.OAGC@gmail.com
- Applications must include ALL of the required materials at the time of submission-- incomplete applications will not be reviewed
- Late applications will not be reviewed
- Materials submitted electronically will receive a confirmation of receipt sent to the email address that submitted materials. Materials mailed will not receive confirmation. If mailing, make a copy of materials to keep for your records. We are not responsible for mail that does not reach the OAGC office.
- Submitted materials will not be returned (including submitted photos, photos of art work, and/or videos of performance pieces)
- Applications will be reviewed by a committee consisting of the Scholarship Chair, OAGC Parent, OAGC Governing Board Member, and a current Member of OAGC

STUDENT ESSAY

- Essays **must be the original work of the student**. Age appropriate expectations will be considered during essay review. Those reviewing applications are educators or have extensive experience in working with student writing samples.
- Essays should be typed and edited so they **do not exceed** the maximum word count
- Recommended formatting: single spaced, 12-point font (Calibri, Times New Roman, Ariel)

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

- Each applicant must submit **two letters of recommendation**. Specific applications give additional guidance.
- Letters of recommendation should **connect** to the individual student's interests and strengths that have been observed by the person of influence. The student's overall score will reflect whether a common thread, expressing individual passion, curiosity, and/or artistic ability, has been woven throughout their application materials.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Alesha Haybin - OAGC Scholarship Committee Chair
Alesha.Haybin.OAGC@gmail.com

Updated: 11/15/19

All materials available in fillable PDF on our website!
www.oagc.com/scholarship.asp

OAGC'S 68TH ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

THE HILTON AT EASTON, COLUMBUS, OHIO—OCTOBER 18–20, 2020
3900 Chagrin Drive, Columbus, OH 43219 614-414-5000

Registration: Complete and **mail** this form with your payment or purchase order to:
OAGC, P.O. Box 30801, Gahanna, OH 43230.
Make checks payable to the OAGC.
Complete and **fax** this form and purchase order copy to: Kay Tarbutton, OAGC Registrar
Fax: 614-337-9286; Phone: 614-337-0386
E-mail: oagcregistrat@oagc.com

Membership Rates: *Not a member?* You may join the OAGC at the time you register for the conference and receive member rates. Membership information is located online at www.oagc.com under “membership.”

Cancellation Policy: Cancellations must be received, in writing, by the registrar by **October 5, 2020**, and are subject to a \$50 fee.

NO PREREGISTRATIONS ACCEPTED AFTER 10/5/2020
{Due to mail and fax delivery issues}
Onsite registration will be open if there is available space. Please call registrar at 614-337-0386 for availability.
NO REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN FOR CANCELLATIONS AFTER October 5, 2020.
Use a separate form for each registrant. Photocopy as needed.

GENERAL INFORMATION
(Please complete all fields.)

Last name / First name / M.I. _____

District / Organization (if applicable) _____

Send mail to Home Work

Home address _____

City / State / ZIP _____

Work address _____

City / State / ZIP _____

County of work _____

Daytime phone (____) _____

Home phone (____) _____

Home e-mail _____

Work e-mail _____

Please PRINT e-mail clearly. Early registration confirmation will come to e-mail address.

PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION
(Select all that apply)

Teacher Parent Coordinator Board member

Presenter Other

EVENTS

EARLY REGISTRATION *Must be received by September 30, 2020*

	Member Rate	Nonmember Rate	
A. Sunday Included at no charge with 1- or 2-day registration Please check if attending			A _____
B. One Day Only Continental breakfast & hot lunch provided Please indicate dietary restrictions Circle: <i>Vegetarian or Regular</i>	____ \$190 <i>Check day attending</i> ____ Monday ____ Tuesday	____ \$235 <i>Check day attending</i> ____ Monday ____ Tuesday	B \$ _____
C. Two Days (Monday and Tuesday) Continental breakfast Please indicate dietary restrictions Circle: <i>Vegetarian or Regular</i>	____ \$275	____ \$325	C \$ _____
D. Late Registration Fee	LATE REGISTRATION FEES APPLY IF postmarked after September 30, 2020 ____ \$50 <i>Treasurers' offices do not always forward registration paperwork to the OAGC. Please mail or fax a copy directly to the OAGC.</i>		D \$ _____
E. OAGC Membership Type <i>Required to receive member rates at fall conference</i>	____ \$40 (Basic)		E \$ _____
F. OAGC Division Membership In addition to basic membership <i>Please check division</i>	____ Coordinator \$15 ____ Teacher \$10 ____ Parent \$5 ____ Higher Education \$10		F \$ _____

Method of Payment

Registration check # _____ \$ _____ PO # _____ Membership check # _____ **Total** \$ _____

Treasurers' offices do not always forward registration paperwork to the OAGC. Please mail or fax a copy directly to the OAGC.

The OAGC may provide mailing labels to organizations or individuals with like interests. Check if you do NOT wish to have your address included.

2020 OAGC ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE LODGING INFORMATION

We are pleased to announce that the OAGC 68th Annual Fall Conference will be held at the Hilton Columbus-Easton.

In order to receive the special conference rate of **\$173.00**, please call and make your reservation directly to the hotel by **September 25, 2020**.

Please call 614-414-5000 to secure your reservation with any major credit card. The group code for the OAGC discount is "GIC." You may also go directly to the OAGC reservation page on the Hilton Web site: <https://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/C/CMHCHHF-GIC-20201014/index.jhtml>.

Hilton Columbus-Easton

3900 Chagrin Drive, Columbus, OH 43219
Phone: 614-414-5000 • Fax: 614-416-8444

Cost: \$173.00 plus 7.5 percent county sales tax & 10 percent city bed tax [If you are tax exempt, the county sales tax will be waived; however, tax-exempt status does not apply to the city bed tax.]

FROM THE NORTH: CLEVELAND . . .

Take Interstate 71 South to Interstate 270 East to the Easton exit (**exit # 33**). Exit onto Easton Way.
Remain on Easton Way through one stoplight, crossing over Stelzer Road.
Make a right on Chagrin Drive into the hotel parking lot.
(The hotel is on the corner of Chagrin Drive and Easton Way.)

FROM THE SOUTHWEST: CINCINNATI . . .

Take Interstate 71 North to Interstate 670 (toward Port Columbus International Airport).
Go past the airport to Interstate 270 North (approximately 1 mile).
Take the Easton exit (**exit # 33**) onto Easton Way.
Remain on Easton Way through one stoplight, crossing over Stelzer Road.
Make a right on Chagrin Drive into the hotel parking lot.
(The hotel is on the corner of Chagrin Drive and Easton Way.)

PHONE IN YOUR
RESERVATION
EARLY!



FROM THE EAST: PITTSBURGH . . .

Take Interstate 70 West to Interstate 270 North.
Take the Easton exit (**exit # 33**) onto Easton Way.
Remain on Easton Way through one stoplight, crossing over Stelzer Road.
Make a right on Chagrin Drive into the hotel parking lot.
(The hotel is on the corner of Chagrin Drive and Easton Way.)

FROM THE WEST: INDIANAPOLIS . . .

Take Interstate 70 East to Interstate 670 (airport exit).
Remain on Interstate 670 to Interstate 270 North.
Take the Easton exit (**exit # 33**) onto Easton Way.
Remain on Easton Way through one stoplight, crossing over Stelzer Road.
Make a right on Chagrin Drive into the hotel parking lot.
(The hotel is on the corner of Chagrin Drive and Easton Way.)

OAGC ANNUAL AWARDS

NOMINATION FORM

Nominee: _____
 Home address: _____
 City, State, ZIP: _____
 Home phone: _____ E-mail address: _____
 Position/Title: _____ Years in position: _____
 Employer: _____
 Employer address: _____
 City, State, ZIP: _____
 Employer phone: _____
 E-mail address: _____

ANNUAL AWARDS CATEGORIES

See criteria and guidelines on the following page

Choose one:

OAGC STATE AWARDS

- _____ Promising Practice School District
- _____ Civic Leadership
- _____ Distinguished Service

OAGC DIVISION AWARDS

- _____ Parent of the Year
- _____ Teacher of the Year
- _____ Coordinator of the Year
- _____ Higher Education

Nominated by: _____
 OAGC member: Yes _____ No _____
 Position/Title: _____ OAGC Region (if member): _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, ZIP: _____
 E-mail: _____
 Day phone: _____
 Night phone: _____

- **Please attach material to support the nomination, which may include** contributions, affiliations, leadership positions, publications, qualifications, and pertinent accomplishments of the nominee that demonstrate exemplary service to the field of gifted education.
- **Submit three, but no more than five, letters of support.**
- **E-mail this completed form and supporting materials in PDF format to Kay Tarbutton at sktarbutton@sbcglobal.net.**

Questions? Contact Beth Wilson-Fish, ewilsonfish@gmail.com

NOMINATIONS ARE DUE BY
September 1, 2020

OAGC ANNUAL AWARDS GUIDELINES

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

- The state and division awards shall be presented at the annual fall conference.
- A nomination form will be printed in the *Review* and online at www.oagc.com prior to the conference.
- All nominations and materials shall be kept confidential among committee members.
- All application materials must be submitted together. **Incomplete applications will not be considered.**
- The following categories shall be used in judging the nominations:

Personal Qualities *Pioneering in Field of Gifted Education*
Professional Qualities *Exceptional Performance in the Field*
Unusual Leadership in Gifted

Award Descriptions

State Awards

- Promising Practice School District:** The district demonstrates a commitment to providing a comprehensive, appropriate education for gifted students through policy and practice and/or demonstrates a creative approach to gifted education and issues.
- Civic Leadership:** The person has made a significant civic impact to promote the needs of gifted students through public policy or support.
- Distinguished Service:** The person has made a significant contribution to gifted education on a local, state, or national level.

Division Awards

The parent, teacher, coordinator, or person involved in higher education has made a significant contribution to gifted education on a local, state, or national level through innovative ideas, public support, advocacy efforts, or exemplary efforts in . . .

- Parent of the Year:** parent leadership, parent support, parent training, or gifted service.
- Teacher of the Year:** educational leadership, educational support, gifted best practices implementation, professional development, or gifted service.
- Coordinator of the Year:** educational policy development, leadership, professional development, gifted curriculum development, gifted program development, or gifted service.
- Higher Education:** higher education gifted policy development, leadership, professional development, publishing, research, data collection, data analysis, gifted coursework development, or gifted service.



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS 2020

The following OAGC Governing Board positions will be elected in June to serve a two-year term of office: president-elect, secretary, and second vice president; chair-elects of the Teacher Division and Parent Division; chair of the Parent Division, and regional representatives from Regions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12. Please nominate yourself or a colleague by completing the nominating form. Nominees for each position must be current OAGC members. Regional representatives must work or reside in the region of representation. Nominees must consent to be nominated. Nominations must be postmarked by April 30, 2020, and may be sent to:

Suzanne Palmer, OAGC Nominating Committee
 7221 Upper Cambridge Way
 Westerville, OH 43082
 E-mail: rsgmpalmer@sbcglobal.net

Duties of the President-Elect

- Aid the president and first vice president in all executive duties.
- Act in the president's place and with the authority of the president in case of absence or inability to perform prescribed duties.

Duties of the Secretary

- Keep a complete record of meetings of the OAGC and the Governing Board.
- Have general charge and supervision of the records of the association.
- Serve all notices required by law and by the constitution.
- Make a full report of all matters and business pertaining to the office at the annual meeting.
- Act as secretary of the Executive Committee.
- Upon the election of a successor, turn over all books and other OAGC property to the association.
- Handle all miscellaneous correspondence.
- Provide the president with minutes of the previous meeting for distribution with the agenda for the next scheduled meeting.

Duties of the Second Vice President

- Oversee divisions.
- Keep an up-to-date listing of the OAGC affiliates.
- Collaborate with the divisions to support the formation and continuing operation of affiliate groups.

Duties of the Division Chair-Elect/Division Chair

- Become the next division chair.
- Provide leadership for division programming.
- Serve as liaison between the Governing Board and the division members.
- Function as a resource person in disseminating information to the division.

Duties of the Regional Representatives

- Attend OAGC Governing Board meetings/activities to contribute to board decisions and to gather information to disseminate throughout represented region.
- Serve as liaison to the membership through regular communications.
- Promote membership and support advocacy efforts on behalf of gifted children.
- Assist in forming new and supporting existing affiliate organizations in their region.

Region 2 counties: Defiance, Eric, Fulton, Henry, Lucas, Ottawa, Sandusky, Williams, Wood

Region 4 counties: Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Logan, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, Shelby

Region 6 counties: Crawford, Huron, Knox, Marion, Morrow, Richland, Seneca, Wyandot

Region 8 counties: Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain

Region 10 counties: Belmont, Carroll, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Jefferson, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Tuscarawas

Region 12 counties: Columbiana, Mahoning, Trumbull

15
HOURS
REQUIRED
TRAINING

1
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SOLUTION



OAGC and GT Ignite have partnered together to bring you the Gifted Training bundle. We understand that meeting the new requirement of 15 hours of professional development in gifted education may seem like a daunting task... until now. Register online now for a 10% discount at gtignite.com/pricing.



Northwestern University's
Center for Talent Development
 PROGRAMS & RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS, STUDENTS & FAMILIES



Center for Talent Development

at Northwestern University is dedicated to helping gifted students reach full potential. CTD's pathways approach leads students on a journey of intellectual, emotional and social growth.



Resources for Schools and Educators

- > Professional Development
- > Gifted program evaluation
- > Policy development and policy writing assistance
- > Job opportunities (Summer, Weekend, and Online programs)

For Students
 Age 3–Grade 12

- > Assessment to identify academic strengths
- > Rigorous, individualized online courses, offered year-round
- > Weekend programs
- > Residential and commuter summer programs held on Northwestern University's Evanston, IL campus
- > Leadership and service-learning offerings

Northwestern | CTD

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For more than 50 years, the OAGC has assisted parents, teachers, coordinators, and administrators of high-ability children. The *Review* reaches thousands of members and affiliates and is posted on our Web site for customers just waiting to learn about your products or services. Ad rates are reasonable, so view other issues of the *Review* at www.oagc.com/publications.asp and advertise today.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent-Teacher Association | <input type="checkbox"/> Library/Media Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gifted Education | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Call for Articles – Fall 2020 Review

General Call

Please note that the deadline for articles for the OAGC fall *Review* is **June 15, 2020**. We encourage readers to submit any article they believe will be useful to the OAGC membership.

In addition, we will be accepting the following articles from all regions: Teacher Features, Spotlight on Student Talent, and other regional articles of interest.

If you would like to submit an article relating to a gifted education topic or an article featuring a teacher, coordinator, program, or student in your region, please review the article submission guidelines on <http://oagc.com/publications.asp>. All student submissions must have a student permission form completed by a parent or guardian. The form is also available at the above link.

If you have questions, please contact Ann Sheldon at anngift@aol.com.