GIFTED CHALLENGES AHEAD

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The OAGC Review is published four times each year: spring, summer, fall, and winter. The deadlines for submission of items are February 15, June 15, and November 15, respectively. Deadlines for advertising submissions are February 1, May 1, July 1, and November 1. Permission to reproduce items in the OAGC Review is to be obtained from the authors. Submit articles to executive director Ann Sheldon at anngift@aol.com.
Let’s try a little word association. I’ll say a word, and you tell me the first word or picture that comes into your mind.

“Challenge.”

Did you hear it as a noun or a verb? Were you the one challenging something or someone, or were you the one being challenged? Did the word or picture involve a personal situation or a professional one? How did that word make you feel?

Here is the definition according to the Oxford English Dictionary:

**Challenge**: Noun: to call or take part in a test or competition; a task or situation that tests someone’s abilities; an objection or query as to the truth of something, often with an implicit demand for proof. Verb: invite someone to engage in a contest; enter into competition with or in opposition against; make a rival claim to threaten someone’s hold on a position; invite someone to do something that one thinks will be difficult or impossible; dispute the truth or validity of.

Did any of those definitions describe the last few months for you, at work or at home?

In gifted education, sometimes the word “challenge,” like the word “gifted,” can indicate both a blessing and a curse.

We dedicate ourselves to convincing our colleagues and ourselves to challenge gifted students academically. Some days, the ongoing rounds of state and local advocacy seem to be a challenge, and we challenge the myths about the needs of gifted students that stand as barriers to providing the services they need. At the end of a long day/month/budget biennium, the passion and dedication we feel for our gifted students seems to be more of a challenge than a blessing. We can use the challenge of working with gifted children, however, to keep ourselves motivated and excited about our profession. The challenge of advocating for gifted children keeps our minds sharp and our wits about us.

Whether or not we experience challenge as a positive force or a negative one is really about attitude, then, isn’t it?

Recently, I’ve been exploring the park trail system in and around my home county in a dogged attempt to become more physically fit (and to find somewhere quiet to think). I’ve learned to take walks, usually by myself, partly because that appeals to my introverted nature and partly because at this point I walk so slowly and for such short distances that it’s a challenge finding someone who is willing to accompany me at my pace. Over the past three months, however, I’ve been noticing that my distances are getting longer and my pace is getting faster (although I’m still the turtle, not the hare); and as I continue to explore new trails, I am developing a preference for some trails over others. (Perhaps it’s not a surprise that I mainly prefer trails that curve gently from left to right but do not necessarily curve up and down.) I’ve learned some practical lessons: equestrian trail does not equal easier, shoreline trail sometimes means on the edge of a cliff, mud and horse poo look the same when it’s raining, you can walk farther when you’re texting but not when you’re talking on the phone, and pedestrian bridges are quite sturdy and will not collapse when you set foot on them.

And I’ve relearned important lessons that are easy to forget in the bustle of modern life: often challenges feel bad when they’re happening, but later you feel a lot stronger—often better—because of them; it’s important to take care of yourself; even incremental positive change is still positive change. On my walks, I’ve thought a great deal about what we teach others by example—I’ve noticed my teenage son choosing to take more walks outside since I’ve been sharing my walking experiences with him—and about the immediate effects of focusing on positive aspects rather than negative ones. Although I’m sure sometimes the dog-walkers and joggers who share the trail with me wonder why I’m mumbling to myself, the pep talks have pulled me through plenty of challenges, great and small.

I’ve no desire to get preachy or to fall into platitudes in this message, but we all know that life is a continuous series of challenges—some we set for ourselves, and some imposed upon us. I ask you only to reflect upon your own ways of meeting these challenges and to tell you that I’m glad you’re on this trail of gifted education and advocacy with me. Even if we’re a few hundred feet apart from time to time, we can handle these challenges together. ✍️
No Rest for Gifted Advocates

If the phrase “no rest for the wicked” has any validity, gifted advocates have been wicked indeed this year. With raging budget debates, new report card implementation, a new state superintendent, questions about common core implementation, teacher evaluation system issues, revision of the gifted operating standard, and the puzzling issue of gifted student subgroup value-added growth grades, there is very little rest. The most pressing issue is the biennial budget, which has been working its way through the General Assembly. The following is a recap of the budget deliberations thus far, a preview of the final months of debate, and a summary of other issues.

Budget Recap and Preview

The executive budget for education, titled “Achievement Everywhere,” was released in early February to much fanfare. Governor John Kasich billed the plan as one in which poorer districts would get more funding and every child (including every gifted child) would get help. Unfortunately, the executive budget language and numbers did not match the governor’s claims. The good news was that Governor Kasich acknowledged that gifted students have different needs and included $86 million in the budget for gifted education. The bad news was that there was no accountability for how districts would spend the funds, that the funding did not follow the gifted child, and that the new operating standards lowered expectations of students to the minimal level of health and safety and the “requirements necessary to ensure each student has mastered a common knowledge base in order to graduate from high school.”

The House Primary and Secondary Finance Subcommittee listened carefully to concerns from the gifted community, especially those who testified before the subcommittee as well as the full House Finance Committee. To view the witness testimony, please go to www.oagc.com/?q=statebudget.

Funding

The House Finance Committee accepted a substitute bill (HB 59) on April 9, 2013, that included a much-needed change to the gifted education funding formula. The substitute bill changed the governor’s suggested $50 per ADM (average daily membership or average number of pupils in a district) to the following formula:

1. $5 x ADM for gifted identification in FY2014 and $5.05 x ADM for gifted identification in FY2015
2. One gifted coordinator unit allocated for every 3,300 students in a district’s gifted unit ADM, with a minimum of 0.5 units and a maximum of 8 units allocated for the district
3. One gifted intervention specialist unit allocated for every 1,100 students in a district’s gifted unit ADM, with a minimum of 0.3 units allocated for the district

The unit will be valued at $37,000 in FY2014 and $37,370 in FY2015.

In addition, ESCs will be allocated $3.8 million to fund additional gifted units.

The overall level of funding in HB 59 for gifted education is approximately $85.7 million in 2014 and $86.5 million in 2015.

The bill also specifies that the gifted unit funding will be used by districts for qualified gifted coordinators and gifted intervention specialists.

In addition, the House bill calls for a gifted education cost study to be completed by March 31, 2014. Elements of the study “shall include, but not be limited to, costs for effective and appropriate identification, staffing, professional development, technology, and materials and supplies at the district level. In addition, the Department shall determine the costs of statewide support needed for this population.”

Accountability

The subgroup accountability section is somewhat changed, requiring the state board to determine satisfactory achievement and progress of the subgroups and requiring the districts to submit an improvement plan if their performance is unsatisfactory. The language is certainly stronger than that contained in the executive budget, but it likely needs to be strengthened further.
Operating Standards
The operating standards now include language that requires the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to ensure that any achievement gap closure is not addressed by “suppressing the achievement levels of higher achieving students” and requires the State Board of Education to develop minimum operating standards that require “providing children access to a general education of high quality according to the learning needs of each individual, including students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, limited English proficient students, and students identified as gifted.” In addition, the language that calls for the State Board of Education to “review and revise” the operating standards has been eliminated from the bill.

Straight A Funds
The Straight A innovation funds originally proposed in Governor Kasich’s budget were cut in the substitute bill, but not eliminated entirely. In addition, the purpose of the funds is more carefully delineated. Grants will be given a priority if the goals of the projects meet several criteria regarding the “achievement and progress for each subgroup of students specified under division (A) of section 3317.40 of the Revised Code.”

College Credit Plus
The provision that consolidated multiple dual enrollment/postsecondary programs was removed from the bill and probably will go into a separate bill for later consideration. There is language that will allow funding to flow to PSEO and dual enrollment programs for courses in the Transfer Assurance Guidelines (TAG) and Ohio Transfer Module (OTM). It is possible that this language could be problematic for highly advanced students taking upper-level college coursework; if so, the OAGC will need to seek a change to this provision.

Preview of Next Budget Steps
The Senate now has its turn to make changes to the budget. The schedule will be very rapid, compared to the amount of time the House has taken with the bill. Beginning on April 16, the full Senate Finance Committee heard testimony on the budget bill from the Office of Budget and Management as well as from the governor’s Office of 21st Century Education and the new state superintendent of public instruction. The Senate Finance Subcommittees working on the various components of the bill have until May 14 to conclude their work; a new substitute bill is to be released on May 28 and voted out of the Senate on June 5. At that point, negotiations between the governor’s office, the House, and the Senate begin in earnest.

Gifted education advocates will need to watch the progress of the bill carefully and be ready to testify. It is clear that the testimony of gifted educators and parents had a tremendous impact on the House’s treatment of gifted education funding in this budget. It is also clear that we will face opposition to the changes made to gifted education in the House version of the budget. It is critically important to keep e-mailing and phoning your individual legislators in the Ohio House or Senate, regardless of whether they are on the finance committees. Every legislator tracks the communications that he or she receives on particular issues. Gifted education needs to remain on their minds. Please make a point of going to the OAGC Web site to determine who your representative and senator are and getting to know them. The legislative directories are continually updated at www.oagc.com/?q=legislators. Also, please check the OAGC Advocacy Alert page every Friday for an update on the budget process: www.oagc.com/?q=advocacyalert.

The ODE Unveils New Report Card Simulations with Value-Added Subgroups
On April 10, the ODE released simulations of the new report card for both school districts and buildings. Included in the simulations are value-added ratings for all student population subgroups. The value-added grades for the gifted subgroups will require some careful analysis. Some of the subgroup grades follow the expected pattern of previously excellent schools and districts showing good growth for the gifted student subgroup. But there are also excellent-rated districts and schools with grades of “D” and “F” for the gifted subgroup. Parents of gifted children should review this subgroup grade carefully. The report card simulations can be found at the following link: http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDedicatedPage.aspx?page=1071.

New State Superintendent
In April, Dr. Richard Ross was sworn in as the new state superintendent of public instruction for the state of Ohio. Ross headed Governor Kasich’s Office of 21st Century Education and was considered the architect of the “Achievement Everywhere” education budget. Previously, he was the superintendent of Reynoldsburg City Schools. Ross believes in strong building-level leadership and in removing mandates that unnecessarily tie the hands of district administrators, for example, maximum teacher-to-student ratios. Because many senior staff members at the ODE have resigned, Ross probably will seek to fill these positions quickly over the next few months.

Gifted Operating Standard Revision
The ODE has formed a new gifted advisory council in order to review the gifted operating standards. The first meeting
of the council was scheduled for April 30, 2013. State law requires all administrative rules to be reviewed every five years. While it will be difficult to make some changes because of the ever-changing gifted education funding mechanism, the ODE is moving forward with plans to make revisions. A draft of the operating standards is posted on the ODE Web site. The tentative schedule for the operating standard review is as follows:

December 2012—Generating list of needed changes to the Operating Standards
January 2013—Gifted Advisory Group discussion of upcoming 5-year rule review of Operating Standards
February 2013—Initial draft of proposed amendments
March 2013—Advisory meeting to discuss draft of proposed amendments
April 2013—Posting of draft rule amendments for public comment
May 2013—Discussion of proposed amendments in State Board of Education
July 2013—Resolution of intent to consider the amendment of the rules
Early September 2013—Rules filed with JCARR
October 2013—Public hearing at the state board meeting; JCARR hearing
November 2013—Resolution to adopt, full board

The OAGC will respond to all proposed changes from the ODE. Please watch for alerts on this issue in the upcoming months.

To keep abreast of all advocacy news, please sign up for the OhioGift listserv. Please e-mail artsnyder44@cs.com for directions. You may also e-mail me directly at anngift@aol.com, and I will make sure that you are added to the listserv. Please check the OAGC Web site frequently for new policy and advocacy items. Also, if you are a member of an OAGC division and wish to be included on the division listserv, please go the division area after you log in to the OAGC Web site for directions. Don’t know your user code/password to log in? Please contact me at anngift@aol.com or executivedirector@oagc.com.

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This article may be reprinted in local OAGC affiliate publications.

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**COORDINATOR CORNER**

**The Future of Gifted Education Is All about the ROI**

*By Julie Lenner McDonald*

*Chair of the Coordinator Division*

What does the education future hold for coordinators of gifted services and programs? Unfortunately, if our recent past is any indication, the future is not all that bright. As reported at the fall conference by Ann Sheldon, executive director of the OAGC, services for students over the past two years have fallen by double-digit figures. Coordinator positions have been reduced as districts use other means to cover their coordination obligations. Going forward, how do we change the outlook for students and their families and for our own role as coordinators? It is quite simple: Provide a balance sheet that shows each district we serve their return on investment (ROI).

When we advocate for students, ROI provides another avenue for making the argument in their favor. ROI is a language spoken by district treasurers. To oversimplify, how many of our students count, where do they count, and what are they worth? While no one like to reduce students to dollars and cents—it doesn’t feel humane—coordinators need to look at this set of data. Would families open enroll into a neighboring district to get better gifted services? Would district test data fall if gifted students left the district? Or would data fall if gifted students stayed and were not served? What does the conversation sound like when parents begin to ask questions, and the answers are negative?

As coordinators have different conversations with their districts, the concept of ROI can help. Coordinators and their charges can also help by contacting their state representatives and senators during the budget process. We know voices can have an impact, so please speak up—your voice is free and is one of the best returns on investment we have in the fight to educate gifted students.
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A COORDINATOR
By Jean Kremer, Gifted/Talented Supervisor, Montgomery County Educational Service Center

Having grown up as child number two with nine brothers and six sisters, I’ve been a “coordinator” for at least 50 years now, helping to manage all those younger brothers and sisters. My grasp of the art of multitasking must have taken shape through those years, and for that I am grateful. Work in the field of gifted education is extremely open-ended, and with its constant changes and challenges, it requires a great deal of flexibility. Over the years, I’ve worked in ten school districts, starting in Sydney, Australia. Some of my jobs were in large public systems, some in private religious schools; now having just taken a job at an ESC, I have six more districts to add to that list. I’ve taught regular education, special education, and gifted education, and now I am the gifted supervisor. I worked for so many years with district leaders who simply ignored gifted kids that I am now amazed at how many deeply care about serving the needs of gifted children. Thanks to Ann Sheldon’s OAGC advocacy efforts and the legislators who created the maintenance of effort provision, I am at the table on a daily basis, brainstorming how best to identify and serve our gifted children. The district report card showing value-added gains of gifted children is the measure of accountability that helps make these discussions happen. After all these years, we are finally talking about the needs of our gifted students. We are finally talking about clustering as a necessity. Remember when the gifted kids were sprinkled throughout all the classrooms so there would be a model for the others? Those days are soon to be gone. We are setting up gifted HQPD for teachers and focusing identification efforts to match student needs to services. This world finally makes sense. I only hope the new budget allows this discussion to continue.

We all know that gifted kids, when given opportunities to follow their strengths and passions at home, in school, and in the community, have the ability to make our world a much better place. We as a nation and state can benefit immensely by working to meet the needs and develop the passions of our gifted students. What better way to influence the next generation than by being good role models for learning through our own professional development?

Several great developments have taken place locally in the field of gifted education. I was fortunate to find Art Snyder 20 years ago when we discussed a listserv to connect our gifted folks here in west central Ohio. Art has kept us effectively communicating the gifted education message to hundreds of advocates across the state. Our West Central Ohio Association for Gifted Children (WCOAGC) affiliate has continued to provide rich workshops on a monthly basis. There is much expertise within our team of gifted coordinators. Most recently we were introduced to the College Board Springboard program, which provides a vertical framework of standards-based curriculum for grades 6 through 12 using real-world problems to prepare kids for success when they get to AP courses. WCOAGC members learned about gifted services provided through Moodle to reach students through online blended learning models. Our group is starting a cohort with a major university to provide a gifted endorsement opportunity at a huge cost savings. Coordinators in our northern area started a professional learning community, gathering a half day each month to share concerns, ideas, and solutions. We have benefited much through sharing the expertise of our professional group.

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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/?q=publications and advertise today.

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# OAGC’s 61st Annual Fall Conference

**The Hilton at Easton, Columbus, Ohio—September 22–24, 2013**

| 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: sktarbutton@sbcglobal.net

## Membership:
You may join the OAGC at the time you register for the conference and receive member rates.

## Cancellation Policy:
Cancellations must be received, in writing, by the registrar by September 16, 2013, and are subject to a $50 fee.

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### NO PREREGISTRATIONS ACCEPTED AFTER 9/16/2013*

*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 SEPTEMBER 16, 2013.**

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*Due to mail and fax delivery issues*
We are pleased to announce that the OAGC’s 61st Annual Fall Conference will be held at the Hilton Columbus-Easton.

In order to receive the special conference rate of $147.00, please call and make your reservation directly to the hotel by September 5, 2013.

Please call 614-414-5000 to secure your reservation with any major credit card. The group code for the OAGC discount is “GFT.” You may also go directly to the OAGC reservation page on the Hilton Web site.

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

Cost: $147.00 plus 6.75 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.)

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.
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(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.
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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: _____________________________________________

Nominated by: _______________________________________________

OAGC member: Yes ___ No ___

Position/Title: _______________________________________________

OAGC Region (if member): _____________________________________

Address: ___________________________________________________

City, State, ZIP: ___________________ County: _________________

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.
• Submit three copies of this completed form and supporting materials to:

  OAGC Awards
  P.O. Box 30801
  Gahanna, OH 43230

  Contact Beth Wilson-Fish, ewilsonfish@gmail.com

NOMINATIONS ARE DUE BY June 30, 2013

Annual Award Categories

See criteria and guidelines below

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

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
  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

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.
Infusing Project-Based Learning in the Gifted Classroom

By Jeffrey Shoemaker

Having been a gifted intervention specialist in an urban school district for the past eight years, I have found that my students are looking for an education that can be translated into real-life experiences outside of the classroom, and I believe that our students need to be taught the skills to handle those experiences. I believe that, as GISs, need to focus on five overarching skills (you may tweak them based on your students’ needs) that will help students be successful in a project-based learning classroom and in the real world.

Before we can begin to discuss how to infuse project-based learning into the classroom, we must first discuss what it is. According to www.Edutopia.org, project-based learning (PBL) is “a dynamic approach to teaching in which students explore real-world problems and challenges. With this type of active and engaged learning, students are inspired to obtain a deeper knowledge of subjects they’re studying.” Every teacher should want this from their students. There is a difference between knowledge of subjects they’re studying and knowledge of how to apply them to real-world problems and challenges. With this type of active and engaged learning, students are inspired to obtain a deeper knowledge of subjects they’re studying.

Why would PBL be good for gifted education? There are several reasons. The first is obvious: PBL is engaging and goes into topics in depth. Its capacity to add complexity and depth to study is one of my favorite aspects. For example, if your students’ project requires them to do research, you may have to teach them how to collect data, organize data, and use data in a way that makes sense. There is no one answer to a problem, nor is there only one path to find answers. In this way, PBL also adds choice for students. Students can find a variety of ways to answer the overall driving question of the unit.

Another reason why PBL is important to gifted education is that it makes the students accountable for their learning and teaches them organization. I feel that these concepts go together, because keeping a journal or portfolio, or just using a plain old manila folder to hold all of your work is important. It saves time and keeps students from redoing work unnecessarily.

Finally, PBL incorporates real-world skills into the classroom. Students do some of the same types of collaboration, investigation, and testing that professionals do in their fields of study: PBL makes learning come to life for students.

PBL is an excellent vehicle to foster two additional traits of gifted students: knowledge and use of technology. We are surrounded by technology that keeps improving every day. So we need not only to teach our students how to use technology effectively but also to teach them how to use it in the context of learning.

There are five major skills that we need to impart in our gifted children. They are organization skills, collaboration skills, interpersonal skills, divergent/convergent thinking skills, and communication skills. Again, PBL is an excellent way to reinforce these skills in a natural manner for learning.

Being organized leads to success in the classroom. Sadly, it is not a characteristic that many gifted students have. Many find it mundane and unnecessary. But in the real world, organization skills can help you get a job done faster and more efficiently. We must show students the importance of good record keeping, labeling, and organizing so they can get to what they need at any time.

Collaboration skills and interpersonal skills are connected. Gifted students need to know how to collaborate in a group. They need to know that they don’t have all of the good ideas and that by listening to the ideas of others and collaborating they can come up with many more good ideas. Interpersonal skills are so important. Gifted students have to know when they can take control of a collaboration session, and when not to. They must learn not to sit back and listen without contributing to a session because they don’t like the trajectory of the conversation. They need to know that anyone may have a good idea—some just need more revision than others. Of course, if the idea fails, the group as a whole fails. Many gifted students fall apart when they fail. They take that failure as if they did something wrong. Sometimes by going back to a point, seeing where the failure stemmed from, and fixing it can be a success. They need to be shown that.

We all know that divergent and convergent thinking skills are important and that many gifted students can do these things well by themselves. Demonstrating that process for a group or in a group, however, can be a bit difficult. This is why all the other skills mentioned above are so important. They build on each other. Divergent thinking is defined as “out-of-the-box thinking thinking that moves away in diverging directions so as to involve a variety of aspects and which sometimes lead to novel ideas and solutions; associated with creativity” according to www.wordnet.com. Convergent thinking is defined as “thinking that brings together information focused on solving a problem; especially solving problems that have a single correct solution.” Both processes can be used to solve problems in the real world, so we need to show our students how to use these skills effectively.

Finally, we need to teach our gifted students to communicate. In a PBL classroom, students use real audiences for feedback; they should be encouraged to blog and to create YouTube videos or podcasts using Voicethread or Soundcloud. Interaction with a real audience is important. It gives real feedback. That’s where real learning is experienced.

In conclusion, if we expect our gifted students to lead and succeed in the 21st century, then we need to give them real-life, engaging, and diverse experiences along with skills. Gifted students need to be given the opportunity to see that there is more than one solution and more than one way to get an answer for a project. That’s the gift of project-based learning.

Resources

Web sites: http://www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning
www.bie.org
http://wordnet.princeton.edu/

SEEKING STUDENT ARTWORK NOMINATIONS FOR THE
SUSAN FAULKNER FINE ARTS
EXHIBITION AND AUCTION

The annual Susan Faulkner Fine Arts Exhibition and Auction, held as part of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children Annual Fall Conference, has proudly recognized and supported student artists both through scholarships for exemplary submissions and through students’ sharing in the silent auction proceeds. Student work will again be displayed and sold at this year’s event (September 22–24, 2013), and the scholarship award structure has been reorganized to distribute the monetary awards to more of the participating student artists.

As in the past, selected students will display and offer for sale their unique artwork as part of the silent art auction. Students artwork will not be returned because conference attendees will bid on the art pieces for purchase. **One half of the purchase price of each piece will go to the student artist; the other half will be donated to the gifted student scholarships.** The minimum bid on all pieces of art will be $25. New this year, all students whose work is accepted for display will receive an **award of $15** in addition to their half of the auction purchase price.

Additionally, the artwork selected for the auction will be judged during the conference, and one outstanding artist at each grade level will be awarded a scholarship: High school division—$200; Grade 5–8 division—$100; Grade K–4 division—$50.

Students who wish to display and sell their artwork at the conference must submit this form and a digital photograph of the chosen artwork. Each piece will then be critiqued by a panel of artists from across the state for possible inclusion in the auction.

Criteria for inclusion in the art auction are

- Suitability for public display
- Demonstration of advanced work for a student of this grade level with regard to craftsmanship, design and composition, technical skills, uniqueness, and creativity.
- Diversity of regions and ages of artists
- Additional guidelines:
  - **All artwork** must be a student’s original artwork.
  - Artists should consider creating original artwork specifically for this event; this way the artist will be more willing to part with it when it is selected for exhibit/auction.
  - Note also that students should produce individual, original works, rather than those that are part of a class project. It is very difficult to select one piece from a group of similar submissions. Please understand that when the committee receives numerous pieces that were produced for a single class project, these pieces will be removed from consideration.
  - Please describe the piece on the entry form, as this helps the selection committee understand the artwork and the artist better. Students who are old enough should complete their own descriptions.
  - Note that works of clay and of construction paper tend to deteriorate easily and, unfortunately, are not bid upon as often as we might like; more durable pieces tend to be more appealing to bidders.
  - Students may submit no more than three individual pieces, with no more than two from any particular medium. No more than one item may be selected for the exhibit from any one student, and multiple entries do not guarantee inclusion in the event.
  - Adult nominators should touch base at the end of the school year with nominated students to be sure arrangements are made to get the artwork in the fall if it is selected. This is especially critical for graduating seniors who may be difficult to reach once they are off to college!
This completed nomination form and a digital photograph that shows the quality of the student work must be received by the final deadline of May 30, 2013, in order to be considered. (NOTE: We can not extend this deadline!) Please e-mail the photo as an attachment to the address below; you may send the form as an e-mail attachment or by mail. In addition to student information, please provide contact information for the art teacher, gifted teacher, or gifted coordinator (or other) who should be contacted regarding this student’s selection. Students/Parents and the listed contact will be notified as to whether the student’s artwork has been chosen by August 31, 2013.

**Additional nomination forms are available at the OAGC Web site: [www.oagc.com](http://www.oagc.com)**

Please submit forms and photographs to Kay Tarbutton at the OAGC office by May 30, 2013. Her e-mail address is shtarbutton@sbcglobal.net. The OAGC office address is OAGC, 501 Morrison St., Suite 103, Gahanna, OH 43230. Ph.: 614-337-0386.

Student name: _________________________________________________________________

Parent name: ________________________________________________________________

Student mailing address, including ZIP code: ________________

Student phone number: ____________________________

Student or parent e-mail: ________________________________

Grade in which artwork was created: ____  Student age when artwork was created: ____

OACG region or county: ______________________________________________________

School building and district of student: ________________________________________

Preferred additional adult contact (gifted/art teacher, coordinator, etc.)

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Title: ________________________________________________________________

Adult contact preferred mailing address, including ZIP code: ______________________

Adult contact preferred phone: ____________________________

Contact preferred e-mail: ____________________________

**Description of artwork** (required!)

Title: ________________________________________________________________

Medium: ________________________________________________________________

Briefly describe anything you would like the selectors to know about your piece, for example, your inspiration for the subject matter or the medium; why you picked this piece from all of your artwork; or whether there are any special meanings or imagery in your piece.
AWARD PARAMETERS

- Applicants must be enrolled in grades 3, 4, 5, or 6 during the 2012–2013 school year.
- Applicants may demonstrate excellence in one or more of the following areas: visual or performing arts, academic achievement, or leadership.
- The award consists of a $500 summer opportunity scholarship and an NAGC certificate of excellence.

NOMINATION PROCEDURE

1. The OAGC will accept self-nominations and nominations from parents, teachers, students, and community and civic groups.
2. Nomination packets for the 2012–2013 school year must be postmarked by June 1, 2013.
3. Incomplete nomination packets, or those postmarked after June 1, will not be considered.

SUBMISSION TO THE OAGC

All nomination packets must be complete at the time of submission and include the following:

- A composition written by the student nominee, not to exceed 750 words. Compositions should describe (a) the activity or interest area for which the student is being nominated; (b) how the student became interested or involved in the activity; (c) what impact the activity has had on the student and on others; and (d) how the student’s future plans and goals have been affected by this activity or interest area.
- A completed application form.
- A letter of recommendation, from someone other than a nominee’s family member, explaining why the nominee is deserving of the award, what sets him or her apart from other students, and how the nominee is affecting others.
- A signed release form completed by a parent or guardian, including the student’s Social Security number (required for purchase of savings bond).
- Current photo of the student (no photocopies: 2” x 3” school photo preferred).

SELECTION PROCEDURE

- Upon receipt of the nomination packet, the OAGC will provide e-mail confirmation to the contact on the application form. Please print e-mail address legibly! Materials submitted in the nomination packet cannot be returned.
- A selection committee will review the applications and make awards based on merit. The NAGC reserves the right not to make an award in a state if the selection committee determines that submissions from that state are not exceptional.
- Selection of award winners will be completed by July 30, 2013.
- The OAGC will send a letter to applicants by August 15, 2013, announcing the Ohio Association for Gifted Children’s Distinguished Student Award.
- The award recipient will receive a $500.00 scholarship and a certificate of excellence from the NAGC.

*The OAGC suggests that you keep a copy of the submitted paperwork. The OAGC cannot be responsible for mail that fails to reach our office.*

Please submit the nomination packet to:

**Ohio Association for Gifted Children**

Attn: NAGC Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Awards

P.O. Box 30801
Gahanna, Ohio 43230
Student Information

Name ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

Telephone number ___________________________ Age ________ Grade (at time of selection) ______________ Birth date ______

Social Security number __________________________

Name of parent or guardian __________________________

Address ____________________________________________

Telephone ___________________________ E-mail __________________________

School name ____________________________________________

School address ____________________________________________

Teacher’s name ____________________________________________

Name of Person Nominating Student (e-mail confirmation of receipt will be sent here)

Name ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

Telephone (day) ___________________________ E-mail __________________________

Relationship to nominee ____________________________________________

Other Notification

Is there anyone else that you would like to be notified of this achievement (school principal, teacher)? Please indicate name and address below:

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Checklist for Nomination Packet

• Student composition (no more than 750 words)
• Letter(s) of recommendation (from someone other than nominee’s family member)
• Current school photo of student (digital or original: no photocopies.)
• Signed release form with student’s SSN
• Postmark by June 1, 2013

Please submit this form and the attachments to:

Ohio Association for Gifted Children
Attn: NAGC Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Awards
P.O. Box 30801
Gahanna, Ohio 43230
What is action research?

There are many definitions for action research—here are a few:

- Action research is a method of systematically investigating classroom procedures and practices with an eye toward improving the quality of action in the schools (Tomlinson, 1995).
- Action research is a fancy way of saying let’s study what’s happening at our school and decide how to make it better place (Calhoun, 1994).
- Action research is a form of investigation designed for use by teachers to attempt to solve problems and improve professional practices in the own classrooms (Parsons & Brown, 2002).
- Action Research . . . . is an approach designed to develop and improve teaching and learning (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

Action research is a continuous process that provides an opportunity for teachers to take action and implement research in the classroom to address issues with particular students, academics, and social/emotional needs as well as a variety of other aspects of learning (see list of topics below). The action research process (see guide below) supports teachers in framing a research question (focus area), collecting and analyzing data, implementing an action based on data, reflecting on the complete process to evaluate changes, compiling revisions, and establishing future research questions.

The following is a list of topics that classroom teachers have researched:

- What motivates gifted learners in enrichment class?
- How to increase reading comprehension and critical thinking skills in gifted students?
- What impact do independent study opportunities have on the performance of gifted students?
- How effective is our new gifted and talented mentoring program?
- How can we improve the problem-solving skills of gifted students?
- How can we improve gifted students’ ability to work cooperatively?
- How can we acquire materials to use in the gifted and talented program during the process of creating and hands-on learning?
- How best can we help gifted students realize their learning styles and guide them to make presentations based on their strengths?
- How can bibliotherapy encourage students’ social/emotional development?
- What will motivate gifted students to turn in their assignments and participate in class?
- What instructional strategies would best motivate gifted students?
- How can we implement creativity projects with gifted students?
- What is the most efficient way to serve gifted students?
- Will rubrics improve writing skills and test scores?
- What are the benefits of cluster grouping?
- Does homework improve test scores?
- What is the best age to begin pull-out enrichment services?
- Is book choice a factor in student motivation to read during free time?

Action Research Guide

The planning process for action research consists of a number of steps:
1. Determine a research question (focus area)
2. Collect data
3. Analyze data
4. Implement action based on data
5. Reflect and revise
Step 1—Determine a research question (focus area)

Framing a research question involves the weighing of several criteria. Ideally, the question should

- be open ended (not a yes/no question)
- be written so that it is easily understood
- be of interest to the researcher
- not already have an answer
- ask one and only one question

(Ferrance, 2000)

Consider the academic as well as the social/emotional needs of students when determining a research question.

List all the questions you want to investigate and discuss them with your mentor. Circle the area you want to focus on during this action research project.

Links to support the process of determining a research question (focus area):

- Research-based topics to consider from the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented: http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/resource.html
- Duke University Digest of Gifted Research: http://www.tip.duke.edu/node/84

Step 2—Collect Data

There are many avenues for the collection of data (Ferrance, 2000). For purposes of triangulation, you should select at least three. Below we have provided sources of support for many of them:

- Journals: http://dayoneapp.com/
- Blogs: http://edublogs.org/
- Individual files: http://www.livebinders.com
- Surveys: http://www.surveymonkey.com
- Diaries: https://penzu.com/home?gclid=CPXzzO3Si7UCFYxDMgod-g0A6g
- Field notes: https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/audionote-notepad-voice-recorder/id369820957?mt=8
- Questionnaires: GoogleDocs

Some additional ways to collect and organize data are

- Self-assessment
- Samples of student work
- Observations
- Projects
- Performances
- Portfolios
- Records (tests, report cards, attendance)
- Audio tapes
- Focus groups
- Anecdotal records
- Checklists
- Case studies
- Memos

What three types of data will you collect for your study?

Step 3—Analyze data

Once the data are collected, it is time to classify the central ideas. Teacher researchers may wish to use whole class data, individual data, or subgroup data (Ferrance, 2000). Data could be displayed in the form of a chart, table, mind map, or other graphic.

What themes are emerging in your data?

How will you display your data?

Links to support data display methods:

- Epicollect: http://www.epicollect.net/
- Online chart tool: http://onlinecharttool.com/
- Mind map: http://www.mindomo.com/
- Infogram: http://infogr.am/

Step 4—Implement action based on data

Conduct a brief search for relevant literature about your topic and projects similar to yours. Consider the data collected and the literature review as you develop an action plan. Be sure to focus on only one variable to maintain the integrity of the action research project. Remember that action research is a continuous process, and actions will be revised and implemented many times.

What one action will you take? What strategy(ies) will you implement?

Links to support the literature review process:

Step 5—Reflect and revise

What do you notice—both positive and negative—based on the action you implemented? What will you change to ensure future improvements in this project?

Based on this action research project, what future questions/problems would you research?

Links to support reflection process:
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xvZ9Htn3RY
- http://www.ar4everything.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=33&Itemid=104

Additional resources:
- http://www.edu.plymouth.ac.uk/resined/actionresearch/arhome.htm

Note: Special thanks go to Mrs. Sylvia St. Cyr for providing links to support the steps in the action research guide. Special thanks go to Mrs. Andréá Carovillano for sharing her action research project to be included in this publication (a student example).

References


A STUDENT EXAMPLE

Step 1—Determine a research question (focus area):

List all the questions you want to investigate, and discuss them with your mentor. Circle the area you want to focus on during this action research project.

- How can teachers get students to use their scientific skills and processes more?
- How can teachers be sure they are enriching in the right ways (content/process?)
- What system can be used to track individual differentiation records across the grade levels?
- How can the teachers at Oakdale provide additional enrichment for gifted students?
- What differences can be found from using cluster grouping to prepare for the Ohio Achievement Assessment?

Step 2—Collect data:

What 3 types of data will you collect for your study?

Current Data:

Student survey: data will be collected to determine student interest in various clubs. It will be analyzed by grade level and by gender.

Teacher Survey: data will be collected to determine teacher interest in leading various clubs. It will also provide information on teachers who would be willing to lead specific clubs.

Further Data to be Collected:

Focus Group: invitations will be distributed randomly among gifted students, and students who agree to participate will collaborate to design club and begin a trial version.

Interviews: affective data will be collected after trial group meetings to determine student interest and thoughts.

Student work samples, photos: data from student work samples will be collected during class to determine club’s value to student.
Step 3 – Interpret data:

How will you display your data?

Data will be displayed with charts and other graphics to help make sense of data. The data will also be presented to school administrators in order to facilitate further discussion of school resources to satisfy the demands of the data.

What themes are emerging in your data?

From Student Survey by Grade Level:

According to the data, analyzed by grade level, the top three choices across the three grades are: arts and crafts, computer, and foreign language. These three categories were among the top choices in all grade levels, but not always the favorite. Below is a graph detailing the results of the survey, by grade level.

The most popular choice for third grade was math, although this club was also among the top for other grades as well. Fourth grade was inclined towards health and fitness, and fifth grade chose computer as their favorite.

Another interesting theme found within the data was either an increase or decrease in popularity when comparing grades. For example, students tended to show more interest in several areas as they aged. Computer, cooking, foreign language, and many others show an increase in popularity each year. Perhaps some of the greatest increases in popularity can be found in the following two categories: mentoring/teacher aide and specialized middle school prep. This suggests that students want to spend after-school time preparing for their futures. Perhaps during the time between third and fifth grade, the students become more aware of real-world interests, and begin to understand the need for choosing more mature activities.

Conversely, the only club to show a decrease in popularity was chess. However, within the “other” category, it can be noted that students in the younger grades were more inclined to write in video games or ipod clubs than the upper grades. This again, speaks to the idea that students are more willing to put their time into more mature ventures as they get older.

From Student Survey by Gender

According to the data collected and analyzed by gender, male and female gifted students chose their favorites very differently. Males were more inclined to choose academic and STEM-aligned clubs like math, science and computer, whereas their female counterparts tended to choose domesticated activities such as arts and crafts, cooking, and health/fitness. It is interesting to see this mostly stereotypical arrangement of favorites among the gifted students, and it begs the question: How much of their interests are still influenced by guardians and peers? Below is a graph detailing the results of the data, by gender.

From the sample of students who responded to the survey, 44 were male and 41 were female. As one may see from the data, females outvoted males on nearly every category. This can be explained by the method in which students chose their favorites. Male students were more
likely to choose their favorite 3 or 4 clubs, whereas female students were more likely to check all of the clubs except those in which they have no interest. This voting method may have had an effect on the overall favorites, by skewing the results toward the female choices. Future design of a study such as this, should limit the number of choices students can select on the survey. This will help eliminate skewed results toward one gender or another.

Another interesting trend appeared when comparing the number of students who would like to join the after-school club, once it is available.

Male students tended to become less interested in joining as they aged, whereas the female students stayed fairly stable throughout the grades. In the table above, it is important to note that this data has been analyzed by grade and by gender in order to see the trend.

Teacher Survey

The teacher survey was provided to obtain a list of clubs or activities that teachers throughout the building would be interested in leading. The following table shows the interest level for leading any one club.

From this table, and other gathered information, it is possible to pair up specific teachers who would be interested in starting a club with a group of students who share a common interest.

Step 4~ Implement action based on data:

What one action will you take? What strategy(ies) will you implement?

The overall goal for this project is to create a club for gifted students that will run all year long, beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. During the remainder of the 2012-2013 school year, the following action will be taken to complete the design process:

From the data collected during the survey, a trial club will be formed to investigate the best model for the organization. A focus group will be responsible for determining which topics, among the top three favorites, should be explored, and how the students should be able to work while in the group. A few questions to guide this focus group are: Will this be an individual or small group situation? Is it student or teacher-led? How can students show what they have learned?

Students in the focus group will then participate in the club they designed, and work samples will be taken to identify strengths and weaknesses within the program. For example, if the club is designed to strengthen the scientific process skills of gifted students, the teacher will facilitate student-led investigations that incorporate different process skills. Data can then be collected on the performance of these students in the classroom during the normal science time.

Following are a few pre-conceived ideas on structure and organization of group: group will run based on the Autonomous Learner Model (Betts, 1999). Students will be able to identify and research a topic that is within their interests, and present what they have learned in a product that they believe best represents their learning.
Step 5—Reflect & revise:

Over the last two weeks, a trial group has been formed to identify the structure of next year’s project. The students were very excited to be a part of the formation and design of the group and had many interesting ideas to put forth. I was very pleased with their desire to create the group that meant the most to them. At times, there was some dissent among the group, as they do all have different interests, but for the most part, I believe that the students were able to come to a consensus that was best for everyone.

The final group design is as follows. The Gifted after-school group will meet once per week, beginning in September of next year. Membership within the group will be invitation-only, but the invitation will extend to all gifted students, and any other students a teacher believes will benefit from the group. At most, the gifted group will induct 25 students to work in small groups during structured learning times. These projects will be student-centered, but will be facilitated by the group leader. At other times during the year, students will be able to work independently on self-selected interest projects.

Unfortunately, I cannot reflect on how the student’s academic performance has changed since the beginning of the Action Research project, which is understandable, given that the actual group will not begin until next year. I will say, however, I have noticed that the students who were involved in the planning process seem to exude maturity and a desire to collaborate with teachers more. I am consistently seeing students (not from my class) at the end of each day, who want to ask questions or provide more ideas for the project. Some of these students I have never taught, yet they still seem comfortable coming to me.

It has been an amazing process, to work with these students so closely, and to hear what is truly important to them. At all ages, these kids just want to be heard, and I can’t think of a better way to start a project like this, than to allow students to design it.

Additional Questions

- Should there be separate groups for boys and girls since they show such difference in club choice?
- Can some of these categories be integrated into a single club? For example, can you create a club that is based on using scientific thinking and processing skills, but also requires student use of technology and writing?
- What contingencies are necessary in order to increase the number of teachers who are willing to lead a group?

Next Steps

Next steps for this Action Research project are to find answers to the questions raised during the initial process. I hope to send out another survey, or perhaps interview, teachers a second time to understand what contingencies and benefits that would best increase the number of willing group leaders. I’d also like to begin working with our current GIS to plan for next year’s group. We will decide on the teacher-facilitated projects and curriculum, and set up a tentative timeline for the group.

I believe the next step, after this process, is to meet with our school’s administration to outline the data received, and the initial idea for next year’s group.

I am extremely excited to begin the next steps. We are closer and closer with each idea and each question to finding the right design for these students. And, if their enthusiasm for designing the group is any indication of the work we will see in the future, I cannot wait to see what they can do next.
Human beings are naturally averse to ambiguity. We simply do not like or accept “I don’t know,” “maybe,” or my personal favorite, “the decision is forthcoming.” We much prefer to have hard and fast answers to our questions; whether we like the answers is secondary to actually having them. We can deal with unpleasant certainties; we cannot deal with ambiguities. And this is the world of an educator in Ohio these days. Pessimism abounds as it seems increasingly difficult to see where it is all going, and many see their glasses as half-empty . . . and leaking.

As a curriculum consultant specializing in English language arts (Common Core . . . PARCC) and social studies, I find it more and more frustrating to attempt to assist teachers and district leaders in making sense of all the transitions in standards-based curriculum, assessment, and performance evaluations as there are fewer solid decisions than “undecideds.” Then there is my role as a consultant in gifted education: a critical concept that should be understood and promoted—and funded—as much as any other area. Gifted children and their dedicated teachers have been relegated to leftovers in recent years—if there is money, if we have staff, if we have room, if we have time—and advocates are making the same pleas with legislators and administrators that they were making decades ago. In that time, gifted funding and accountability has had its ups and downs, and we are now at an interesting crossroads: a budget cycle that seems to direct gifted funding for schools and a series of state reports that will reflect a district’s ability to provide for its gifted and high-ability students.

And the question remains: What will be the feature topic in the Review a year from now? Are our gifted children really going to start getting the support they need, or are we just getting our hopes up as we have so often in the past? It is very easy to be jaded, but we cannot afford to be. While we may choose to see our glass as half full or half empty, in point of fact we cannot abandon the glass itself—that is, the opportunity to continue to strive to advocate for and meet the needs of our gifted students in any given setting.

It is possible that a budget will have been approved by the time this article is in print. At the time of writing, however, we have a very interesting House budget proposal to counter the governor’s, and each, in different ways, attempts to work toward acknowledging and benefiting gifted students. My half-full glass is excited at the prospect of actual measurable and accountable funding for gifted identification, services, and the necessary qualified specialists. My half-empty glass reminds me that we are only in a proposal stage, and knowing we have gotten our hopes up before only to have them dashed, we may simply end up where we started with an inadequate MOE or even with all funding eliminated. But even in this worst case scenario, gifted children across the state depend on those who understand them and value their unique abilities to provide them with opportunities, even if funding and budget structures look very different than they have in past years.

The budget proposals that specify money for gifted identification and services and the new state reporting measures, such as gifted value added, the coming Dashboard, and the emphasis on student growth in evaluating teacher performance (includ-
Half Full or Half Empty?

Considering the Future of Gifted Education in Ohio

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ing SLOs), should dissuade districts from neglecting this challenging “they’ll be fine on their own” because “we don’t know what to do with them” population. My half-full attitude sees this as a real springboard to increased attention and more meaningful and challenging instruction for all high-ability learners, notably our identified gifted students. Perhaps districts will begin to value the expertise of the gifted specialists in working with the exceptional students and of qualified coordinators in providing professional development and support that empower classroom teachers to differentiate for and stretch all of the students in their classrooms. Of course, gifted personnel will also have to be on top of the changes in the standards and assessments and may need to rethink traditional structures as they assert their relevance to district processes.

My half-empty outlook sees incredibly burdened teachers and administrators refusing to make any more changes and sees ODE staff stretched too far to be effective, causing state processes to implode under the weight of it all. Perhaps we will never see a Dashboard. Perhaps administrators will convince lawmakers that value added is too hard to achieve for gifted students, that SLOs are too hard for anyone to do, and that this activity should be abandoned. Again, however, our students are not going away, nor are their parents, nor are we as advocates. While we would prefer that official reporting mechanisms demonstrate districts’ commitment and ability to grow all of our students, we know that the impact of telling reports, like *Grading on a Curve* (Sheldon & Grady, 2011), will continue to reveal the disparities in the way we educate students of differing abilities. If anything, perhaps capitalizing on district values of legal compliance and positive public perception will be sufficient at least to maintain or ideally to increase gifted education opportunities.

My fullest glass truly believes that if and when educators and decision makers seek and find success with strategies, methods, and programs that grow gifted students, they will see benefits to all students. When they get over the “either this group or that group” mentality and actively educate all students, they will achieve the results they were hoping for when they marginalized the groups they thought would always just be okay. Many educators whom I meet have an empty glass, the one that says that we are experiencing the demise of public education as a whole. Yet even if this is so, we as advocates for our exceptional children will find avenues for them so long as we keep our passion and our focus on their needs.

I do not have a magic crystal ball or looking glass; I cannot see the future of gifted education in Ohio, and with the ups and downs of the last several years—who could? I can, however, see a glass containing an incredible responsibility to understand, educate, and otherwise support our very special population. Regardless of what we are given in this budget cycle, it is up to us to decide not to empty or abandon the glass, but to fill it with our expertise, enthusiasm, and advocacy for gifted children.

Those of you who know me or who read the last issue of the OAGC Review know that I am a big fan of The Big Bang Theory. Needless to say, when I found out a local movie theater was showing a live and interactive relay of the Paleyfest interview (Paley Center for Media, 2013) with the producers and cast of the show in March, I had to have a ticket. It was a Big Bang Theory fan’s dream. For nearly two hours, we were entertained by a lively question-and-answer session with all seven main actors and three executive producers and writers. Toward the end of the event, an audience member on location asked a question about Sheldon’s character. She wanted to know whether the producers or writers had planned for Sheldon to have Asperger’s Syndrome when they began the show. The question really stuck with me as an educator of and advocate for the gifted and as someone who has studied childhood developmental and psychological disorders.

Now, before I go any further, let me be very clear. I absolutely believe there is a subpopulation of children who are gifted who also are on the autism spectrum. The two can coexist within a child. What I am about to say does not diminish the importance of recognizing those children so they can receive appropriate educational and behavioral services. But I believe a misunderstanding of the social and emotional behaviors of gifted children is resulting in many of those children being inappropriately diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum, either in place of or in addition to a recognition of cognitive giftedness. While this misdiagnosis is ultimately a problem within the fields of medicine and psychology, the problem begins with misunderstandings on the part of educators, families, and the general public.

The confusion is understandable (Webb, 2000). Gifted children exhibit several traits that resemble those shown by children on the autism spectrum: intense interests, repetitive behaviors, a need for order, and social behaviors that do not fit within the norm of age peers, to start the list. If the child in question is an introvert, there may be even more confusion. These descriptors fit Sheldon Cooper, the character who started this whole reflection.

Why would a gifted child display some of these behaviors? While a developmental delay is the reason for certain behaviors related to autism spectrum disorders, it is advanced cognitive development and the subsequent processing of information that causes similar behaviors in the child who is gifted. Children who are gifted intellectually, or who have what we might call superior cognitive ability here in Ohio, are more cognitively advanced than their age peers. As a result, they can take in information more quickly, process it more rapidly, and make more abstract connections to other information than would be expected at that age (Hollingworth, 1937; Niehart, 1999; Silverman, 1997). This can be compounded by related overexcitabilities, or hypersensitivities, that increase the amount of information perceived (Ackerman, 2009). For example, these overexcitabilities might make a child who is gifted more reactive to sensory or emotional experiences, such as background noises or fairness, respectively. If the child is an introvert, this increased input may require the child to isolate himself or herself for periods of time just in order to work through the information overload and regroup before appropriately interacting with others again (Burruss & Kaenzig, 1999).

Let’s think about our friend Sheldon. With an IQ of 187 (yes, I retained this random factoid from some rerun episode), Sheldon’s intellectual capabilities are as far from average on a norm curve as those of a child with an IQ of 13. Think about that for a minute. A score of 100 is considered average. Children with an IQ below 80 typically are considered to have cognitive delays. A child with an IQ that much lower would have even more difficulty. If we apply that to the gifted end of the ability curve, a 187 is unique enough that it occurs only once in every 40 million people. Someone with an IQ that high cannot realistically be expected to think and behave and interact with others as the bulk of the population might think, behave, and interact. Now, as I said, such a high score is a rare occurrence. But a cognitive ability score of 130, just above the cut score for most tests approved for identification in the state of Ohio, is at the 98th percentile—still pretty far above normal. Children with cognitive abilities at that level will behave differently from their age mates.

So how do you tell the difference? The key is to dig deeper into the consistency of and triggers for certain behaviors (Lovecky, n.d.; Niehart, 2000). Know the context in which they occur. Look at how the behaviors may differ at home and at school, and even in different subjects at
school. Consider whether the behaviors change over time, particularly as comfort level increases or when among similarly abled peers. Consider whether a child’s distance from others is a lack of tolerance, common among some children who are gifted, rather than a lack of empathy, more indicative of autism spectrum. If it is truly an autism spectrum disorder at work, the symptoms will be persistent and extreme. The SENG has a Web site with information that details the differences more specifically, and one of the group’s founders, Dr. James Webb, has coauthored a book that is very useful when considering the possibility of giftedness versus autism spectrum disorders or other diagnoses. I highly recommend the book, *Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnosis of Gifted Children and Adults* (Webb et al., 2005), for any educator or psychologist working with gifted children and for families that may have concerns about their kids. It has great information without being overwhelming. Before jumping to the conclusion that a gifted child might be on the autism spectrum, look through some of these resources. If you do decide to proceed with a professional evaluation, be sure to go to a psychologist familiar with the characteristics and behaviors of gifted children. Do not assume all psychologists have extensive knowledge of this population; they most certainly do not. Do your homework and ask questions before settling on a professional. Again, the SENG Web site has a great brochure to help with this process.

Going back to the Paleyfest event, I was particularly pleased with the response that writer and executive producer Steven Molaro gave to the woman who asked the question about Sheldon (Paley Center for Media, 2013). Molaro replied that we know about Sheldon only what he has told us. He continued by saying that Sheldon, like others who may be geniuses or who may be on the autism spectrum, are not defined by their labels. They are people who happen to be unique in how they perceive the world around them, however that might be. All humans have to adapt to something or other in this world, and children who are gifted do not necessarily need to have their behaviors diagnosed and treated. Parents and educators of children who are gifted may be able to help those children adapt to their environments or cope with rapid cognitive processing by drawing from strategies shared by families of children on the autism spectrum or with sensory or attention disorders. A formal label is not needed for that, and even if the strategies help a child continue to progress and grow, a formal diagnosis still may not be appropriate. But the goal shouldn’t be a diagnosis anyway. It should be to help the child grow up with the ability to productively function in a world of people who don’t quite think like he or she does.

**References**


Teens craving challenge in college can find it in various forms. Ivies and other top-tier schools may be the best match for some gifted students. A nationally recognized program in their field of study may be the best choice for other bright teens. For some, though, the best fit comes in the form of an honors program within a larger institution.

Honors opportunities at the college level come in two main varieties: the honors program or the honors college within a university. Many institutions also offer departmental honors wherein a student completes additional requirements—usually a few courses and/or a senior thesis—beyond the regular requirements to graduate in that major. Honors programs and honors colleges, though, offer opportunities across disciplines and even beyond academics.

The National Collegiate Honors Council, on its Web site, enumerates “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors Program,” including criteria for honors faculty, “program requirements [that] constitute . . . no less than 15%” of students’ coursework, and “carefully designed educational experiences.” The organization’s recommendations for an honors college expand upon those for an honors program, adding existence “as an equal collegiate unit,” complete with a dean and a budget on par with those of other colleges at the university.

While often attractive at first blush, honors programs vary widely between institutions, just as gifted young adults do. Teens searching for the best fit for their higher education, as well as the parents, teachers, counselors, and gifted coordinators who support those teens, should research carefully both the benefits and the demands of any honors program under consideration.

**Academics Within and Beyond Honors**

Coursework, of course, is the cornerstone to any collegiate-level honors program or honors college, and honors courses come in all flavors. Some schools offer honors sections of mostly introductory-level courses that meet general distribution requirements for a degree. Some design seminars that are either interdisciplinary or narrowly focused on specialized, even quirky topics. Some colleges provide both types. Often these courses are smaller, limited to about 20 students, whereas large university lecture classes can have ten times that many students taking the same introductory course. In honors courses, the emphasis often shifts to more critical thinking and discussion. Ideally, these courses offer not necessarily more work but more challenging and more engaging work. An example is Bowling Green State University’s Honors Program, in which homework in honors courses is not more time consuming, but more interesting. High school students investigating honors programs should verify that there are enough seats available for most or all students who want to take the various courses.

The benefit of more discussion, however, is greatest when only honors students are permitted to enroll in honors courses, which is not the case at every institution. Another important factor contributing to the quality of honors coursework is the level of the honors students themselves. When researching an honors college, families should look at the SAT/ACT score minimums and any other academic requirements for admission into the honors program. It may be the case that the entire student body of some colleges and smaller universities achieves at a higher level than the honors population within a larger university.

Just as important as the caliber of classmates is the quality of instruction. Most honors courses feature the best professors on campus. Often, this is a mutually beneficial relationship, as many tenured professors most enjoy teaching honors students. But the benefit to the students is even more dramatic when introductory classes normally taught by graduate-student TAs are replaced by honors classes facilitated by veteran instructors with PhDs.

Central to many honors curricula is the senior thesis or capstone project. Many programs require an in-depth research or creative project that spans the honors student’s last semester or even entire last year as an undergraduate. When the assignment is a natural outgrowth of the student’s studies, a capstone pursuit enables a learner to produce a graduate-caliber product under the individual guidance of a faculty member. Whether a novella authored by a creative writing major, a journal article composed by a chemistry major, or a one-act play directed by a theater major, such substantive achievements strengthen students’ applications for both graduate school and the workplace. On the other hand, if the capstone project is just a big add-on, it can be a tremendous burden for a senior busy with other pursuits.

Course requirements to graduate with honors may prove to be too much for some bright learners. Incoming college students should reflect carefully on their own interests and goals. Just as no single elementary school gifted program is a
perfect fit for all gifted youth, neither is any honors program a perfect fit for all gifted college students. A strong student may very well decide that her limited time in college is better devoted to a full second major in another area of strength and interest. Another top student may choose to develop his leadership skills through extensive community service. A creative student may devote herself to multiple theater productions throughout the academic year. Even students who begin an honors program may decide a year or two later that honors must give way to a passion with a stronger draw.

A few schools exempt honors students from the coursework required to develop “well-rounded” scholars. Often called distribution requirements, or general education or general studies courses, these checklists require undergrads to collect credits from various disciplines like natural sciences, social sciences, and the arts. The Honors College at the University of Virginia not only are “free from all distribution and area requirements within the College” but also are permitted to design their own interdisciplinary major. Similarly, Ohio University’s Honors Tutorial College exempts participants from all university general education requirements except freshman and junior composition, and even those can be waived.

Social Supports and Programming

Those enrolled in honors programs or colleges often enjoy a few benefits beyond academics, and such perks differ between schools. One frequent and highly visible attraction is a living-learning community arrangement, offered by many four-year residential colleges. Frequently, some of the most desirable housing on campus is set aside for honors college students. Besides creature comforts, though, students enjoy the benefit of an instant community. In addition to introverted gifted kids landing at a large university, the social pluses of the college within a college may be even more valuable than the academic benefits of honors. At Miami University’s Honors Living Learning Community, students forge bonds in a cluster of two or three courses that they take together. Some schools even have the honors college office, classrooms, music practice rooms, art studios, or computer labs built into the honors residence hall. Prospective students should ask about special programming offered to residents of honors housing. Additionally, prospective students interested in honors housing should inquire whether enough beds are available to meet demand every year. Conversely, students interested in honors academics but not in honors housing—especially those interested in a different living-learning community like the arts, world languages or wellness dorms—should verify that honors students are not required to live in honors housing, as they are at some schools.

Often honors college programming offers stimulating intellectual opportunities outside the classroom. When a national speaker comes to campus, honors students might be invited to join her for dinner. Cultural opportunities, such as plays and musical performances, even out of town, may be arranged just for honors college participants. Honors students frequently are encouraged to attend—and even present at—professional conferences.

Practical Perks

The most attractive honors programs offer a multitude of practical benefits, too. Chief among these, naturally, is money. Many institutions reserve for honors college students various scholarships, study abroad funding, and grants for research and special projects. The latter two are available through the Honors Scholars Program at the University of Cincinnati. Every semester, the program offers at least one seminar course that culminates in a one- to two-week trip, with a substantial portion of each student’s travel costs paid by the program. UC honors scholars have ventured to Montreal, the Brazilian Amazon, the Galapagos Islands, and dozens of other distant locales. Honors scholars also are invited each semester to submit proposals for grants for experiential learning projects.

Nearly as valuable as funding to some students is the possibility of priority registration. Especially at large schools where required courses can fill quickly, the ability to register early each term can mean the difference between graduating on time and not. In their investigation into various programs, high school seniors should ask pointed questions—for example, whether honors students get to register before all other undergrads, or whether honors freshmen register before other freshmen but after all non-honors seniors, juniors, and sophomores? Particularly for gifted students who matriculate with much of their freshman-level coursework completed through AP, IB, and dual enrollment, the opportunity to get into upper-level courses becomes relevant.

Various types of professional guidance may be reserved for honors students. The Honors College at the University of Akron, for example, offers “personal academic/career advisers.” At some schools, the office that supports students in applying for national awards (like the Rhodes, Fulbright, Goldwater, and Truman scholarships) is housed within the honors college and may even reserve its services solely for members. Leads on internships, research opportunities, and certain on- and off-campus jobs like tutoring often are funneled through the honors department precisely because employers and researchers seek honors-caliber students. Leadership training is a common offering, as are service options. In fact, some programs require completion of service hours in order to retain a spot in honors. Workshops on graduate and professional school application often are a staple of honors programming. Virginia Commonwealth

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As I marvel at the developmental milestones met by my seven-month-old son, I begin to realize that my expectations of his future achievements were in place long before he could crawl. As a former student of a magnificent gifted program at Newark City Schools, I expected a lot of myself because I was constantly encouraged to do so. I feel I have been both wired and taught to seek success. Naturally then, in this new parenting role, I plan to do all that I can to ensure my son has every opportunity to reach his academic potential. As a new parent, I am beginning to better understand the parents of gifted students whom I have encountered in my career, and I now wonder what happens when a former gifted student becomes a gifted parent.

Gifted programming was commonplace in the 1980s, which means a generation of gifted students has made its way through the rigors of gifted programs, entered the real world, had children, and now is returning to the schools armed with expectations. All parents, be they gifted or not, expect the best education for their children, and they should. It is our duty as educators to strive to meet and exceed the expectations parents have for their children. Gifted parents, who felt the joy of success as gifted students, may enter the classroom reminiscing of “the good ol’ days” and expect nothing less than to relive their fondest memories. Perhaps you have encountered a few of these parents. They’ve been called “helicopter parents” because, like helicopters, they hover overhead paying close attention to their child's experiences and problems. Do you have a parent in mind right now? The parent who comes into your office with lesson plans already constructed, with enrichment opportunities to share (and volunteer for), or with graded paper in hand ready to inquire into why you took a point off in the final essay. Perhaps you are one of these parents, and you (like me) see nothing wrong with these behaviors.

What can we do to recognize gifted behavior in these former gifted students, students who were once told they could do anything they put their mind to and now feel the same way about their own gifted child? How do we direct their intensity so that the outcome is a positive experience for all involved? We begin by showing empathy. Let the gifted parent know you understand their devotion, and you respect the time and thought they have put into their child’s education. Encourage them to continue to read, research, and share.

We must remember that these are former gifted students who took on independent studies, who enjoy grappling with complex ideas, and who are emotionally moved by social issues. These are minds that will work vigorously by your side to advocate for gifted children and gifted programming. If asked to volunteer as team managers for enrichment opportunities like Destination Imagination, they jump at the chance to once again be surrounded by brainstorming and problem solving. Try sending Mind Benders home with their child to be done as a family, making sure to remind them to discuss the logic behind their solution. Gifted parents are still hungry for a challenge. They still want to know everything there is to know about any given topic, their favorite, of course, being their own gifted child.

We hope that when a gifted parent begins the walk down gifted memory lane, these memories are of positive learning experiences. If and when they eventually mention that they were in a gifted program, ask them to describe their experiences and what stands out most in their mind. We should be proud as gifted educators to say that a lot has changed since they were in school, but a lot of what they were doing then is still seen as good practice today. Sure, Bloom’s Taxonomy may have gotten a face lift, and the Oregon Trail may now be an online app, but we still focus on maximizing each student’s potential both intellectually and creatively. Encourage gifted parents to share their memories about growing up gifted with their gifted child. Suggest that they reread and discuss a favorite childhood book, like A Wrinkle in Time, with their child. Recommend that they create visual word-play puzzles together or revisit a science experiment that excited them as a child. The goal is to involve the parent as the child’s partner in discovery.

Unfortunately, there will be gifted parents who didn’t have a positive educational experience and who may be skeptical of your plans for their child. If the gifted parents never reached the potential they were told so much about, they may now be fearful their child will feel the same disappoint-
ment. They may regret that they didn’t push themselves in school, getting by on their abilities alone, and now they expect perfection from their child to compensate for their own educational past. At the start, these parents might not buy into your goals and agenda, so take extra time to show cause and effect. Talk about the end results but also about the journey it takes to get there. Remind them that just because a student is gifted doesn’t mean he or she shouldn’t have to work hard. Their child might know the answers to all the test questions, but there is always room to dig deeper. Challenge the parents by asking them to help their child find connections between the topics they are studying. Whom did they learn about in history that they would like to read a biography on, or would changing the calculations in a science experiment alter the results? Invite these gifted parents back into the classroom in their mind, to the time when they loved learning. Meet them there and help get them started once again.

Ultimately, gifted parents are going to be by their child’s side ready for the challenge, as they have always been. Other teachers may see them as a nuisance. Other adults may not “get them,” but you do. Our job as gifted educators should be to accept these gifted parents for who they are. They might call you and talk a lot longer than you have time for. They might send you a six-paragraph e-mail at 3:00 in the morning. If it took them a while to finally make it to your door, there might be a lot of pent-up energy waiting to be released. Keep calm and think of them as just another one of your gifted students. Your respect for their passion and commitment to their child’s education will be refreshing, appreciated, and comforting. They will begin to feel that they can be themselves again, and that is all any gifted person has ever wanted to be.

University goes further, offering only to its Honors College students the opportunity to apply for the Guaranteed Admissions Program, which exempts undergraduate seniors from having to apply to get into VCU’s graduate school or professional programs in several health fields.

Some programs extend to undergraduate honors students benefits normally reserved for master’s and doctoral students. Artists get individual studio space. Science students get lab space. Honors students are offered a private, locking study space in the library. And honors students automatically get extended library due dates, as long as a full semester.

Finally, nearly every honors program offers some type of recognition, which may be a notation of honors on the transcript or a special cord or medal worn at graduation. The best reward, however, is the satisfaction of completing a supportive, challenging program that proved to be a good fit for the student.

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Resources


Overdue for an update, this book nevertheless offers a good starting point for researching honors colleges and programs nationwide. Produced by the National Collegiate Honor Council, this guide has narrative entries from each member program. Deans and directors of the programs themselves have submitted descriptions, including participation requirements, admissions process, and scholarship availability. Additionally, the campus overview of each institution, provided by publisher Thomson Peterson’s, covers basic information like enrollment, tuition, and academic programs available—as of 2004.

The Web site of the National Collegiate Honor Council: www.nchchonors.org

Unfortunately, this site lacks any type of search function to narrow down the list of member institutions even to a geographical area; it is simply an alphabetical list of members, each entry a hyperlink straight to the honors college or program. There are a few informational nuggets on the site, however, such as the distinction between an honors college and an honors program, as well as an explanation of the “basic characteristics” of each when fully developed. These elements provide applicants with a list of characteristics to look for and to ask about as they shop for colleges. The FAQs for high school students serve to reassure teens that they will not sacrifice their GPAs in order to reap the benefits of an honors education, which are enumerated as well.
SOCIAL STUDIES AND LITERACY SKILLS

A Perfect Match

By Karen E. Rumley

As teachers transition their curricula and practices to align with the expectations of Ohio’s newly revised state standards, one of the many challenges is making sense of the enhanced literacy demands at every grade level and in every content area. Secondary content teachers are largely uncomfortable with the literacy piece; English teachers who are comfortable with teaching literacy skills are concerned about the increased rigor; and while elementary teachers are usually adept at developing literacy within the content, they are overwhelmed by transitioning up to four subjects at the same time, as are gifted specialists. As we know already, it will not be enough for district and building leaders to copy and distribute the standards to teachers and then say “Go get ’em!” Teachers will require time and support to build their own capacities to meet the new expectations, including developing literacy skills within secondary content classes. For these teachers to stretch their classroom curricula to meet the needs of advanced and gifted learners requires them to be comfortable with the increased demands of the new standard curricula.

If we can step back from the enormity of the transition process, the introduction of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics as well as the Revised State Standards for Science and Social Studies affords us an amazing opportunity to really rethink curricular alignment, instructional practices, and the infusion of critical skills into student activities. The traditional secondary school is departmentalized among teachers credentialed in specific content areas. Thus, a sophomore might start his or her day in American history, then go to biology, then to ELA-10, then to geometry, and so on. The student’s day is compartmentalized as he or she walks into one classroom, gets filled up on some stuff, then walks into another to get filled up on what may seem to be entirely different stuff.

Learning and performance expectations, however, really do flow from subject to subject: we read and write papers in science classes, conduct inquiry-based learning activities in history classes, explain cause-effect thinking processes in math classes, and study historical background in ELA classes. In fact, we do all of it in all of the classes, just with a different content area as the anchor. So why do we teach and explain as though the class expectations were entirely disparate?

The key lies in dialogue, sharing, collegiality, or collaboration—whatever the term, district leaders must find a way to get our content and ELA teachers together in the same room for meaningful discussion about shared skills and resources to support each other and to create holistic rather than compartmentalized learning experiences for our students. Do our social studies teachers know about the CCSS appendices? Do our ELA teachers know the scope and sequence of our history classes? These are great places to start.

English language arts teachers are experienced in selecting and developing written, spoken, and productive literacy skills. While the Common Core State Standards in ELA are beautifully constructed to develop rich, meaningful skills aligned along a K–12 continuum, the teachers are uneasy because the standards at each grade level are much more complex than the previous set, especially with regard to text complexity and written argumentation. One of the most significant concerns is the focus on informational text: it provokes both the anguish of having to give up some favorite literature and the angst of having to locate, incorporate, and instruct with meaningful nonfiction text sources, including those that are nonprint. Interestingly, content teachers use informational text all the time and occasionally delve into fiction to add a story line to content. What other resources are already in the building?

The critical thinking demands in the new standards for every discipline are much higher than before, and secondary content instructors will have to scrutinize their current practices in this regard. Many will find that while they value and expect the use of such skills, they are ill-prepared to teach them. Likewise, these teachers are largely uncomfortable with developing literacy skills. They expect students to be able to read and comprehend the texts that they assign and to write appropriately thorough essays with sufficient argumentation and proper structure and syntax. Rarely are they prepared to develop deficient skills when there is so much pressure to cover the content. The Revised State Standards for Social Studies, however, actually require less detail-specific content than the prior set, which itself required less detail-specific content than people may think. Furthermore, students who lack critical literacy and thinking skills will not process the content anyway. This is where many gifted and high-achieving students run into trouble in high school or college: they never learned to develop these skills with sufficiently complex texts and tasks, so when they reach that demanding instructor who expects more from them than ever before (especially in postsecondary settings), they crash and burn if not provided...
adequate support. Despite common misperceptions, gifted children are not born with inherent learning and reasoning skills. They may be able to learn them faster than other children, but they still need instruction.

In short, the secondary ELA teachers need informational text and content-rich instructional and performance tasks, and the secondary social studies teachers need to incorporate and scaffold key reading and writing skills in their content instruction. Both need to increase the ability of students to gather meaning from a variety of textual and other sources, to synthesize and critically analyze information, and to create supported arguments in written and oral communications. It is a perfect match. So how can these curricular content specialists support each other in their instructional practices and thereby support students in their learning?

What Are We Teaching?

Social studies teachers should be familiar with the CCSS Literacy Standards for history, social studies, science, and other technical subjects that are standards for these content teachers in reading and writing and that directly correspond to the ELA CCSS Reading: Informational Text and Writing strands. They provide standards for developing content-specific literacy in departmentalized courses in grades 6–12. They are not part of the Social Studies Revised Standards, nor do they require that ELA teachers be responsible for teaching the discipline-specific content or texts. In essence, they force the conversation about how we all make sure all of our kids are developing these skills across the day and in a progression.

Social studies specialists also need to be intimately familiar with an invaluable ELA CCSS resource: the appendices. Appendix A contains abundant research and the rationale behind the increased rigor of the standards regarding text complexity, reading foundations, and language development; included are helpful analyses to guide the assessment of texts for complexity and appropriate placement within curricula. Appendix B is a listing of sample exemplar texts (not a reading list) for each grade band that are fictional, informational, and content-specific. This appendix includes sample performance tasks for each type of text as well as excerpts of many of the featured readings. Appendix C is replete with exemplar writing from each of the grade bands and in each of the three types, including historical, technical, and other real-world writing samples with explanations of their success in meeting grade-level writing criteria.

Incidentally, the only specifically named required texts (excluding categories) in all of the ELA standards are American documents in the 11–12 grade band. Social studies and ELA teachers alike will want to ensure that students are able to pull meaning from historical documents from the last few centuries. If social studies and ELA shared the responsibility for working closely with difficult documents, they could assign students to do something like this: Read George Washington’s “Farewell Address” (available in Appendix B) and listen to an audio clip of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s 1941 “Great Arsenal of Democracy” speech. Drawing on evidence from the sources and from specific historical evidence, analyze the similarities and differences in the attitudes of Washington and Roosevelt about maintaining an isolationist foreign policy with Europe. Include your reasoning for why the attitudes may have changed over time.”

Because districts may deviate from or expand on the standards if they really want to, historic content is specified in a scope and sequence of social studies grade levels and high school courses. For example, the U.S. Civil War is 8th-grade content, ancient Rome is 7th-grade content, World War II is in both Modern World History and American History, though the Holocaust is addressed in the former, and so on. Government, geography, and economics are infused into every grade level, and high school courses focus intently on one of the strands. Why does this matter? It would be beneficial for the ELA teachers to understand what social studies content is introduced over time in order to better align literature and nonfiction pieces to support the historical conceptual development—for example reading The Grapes of Wrath in ELA while American History works through the 1930s. At least, it would help if the courses did not counteract each other; the traditional 8th-grade ELA Holocaust unit is illogical when the understanding of the event is best developed in context in high school Modern World History. This ELA teacher has to teach the history to explain the setting of the readings, and the high school teacher either reteaches or totally skips the topic in context. Wouldn’t it make more sense to align the content?

Content does not always match perfectly, but when we are teaching with themes and processes in mind, we ask our students to make connections across time periods and genres. Abraham Lincoln’s “Second Inaugural Address” appears as one of the required readings for ELA in grades 11 and 12, but it does not fit within the scope and sequence of the content of any of the high school social studies courses. Themes of “social justice,” “freedom,” “national strength/unity,” and so many more pervade the social studies courses. Where can we develop interdisciplinary themes to support the instructional demands of both ELA and social studies courses?

Another interesting feature of the social studies standards is that the six high school courses are not grade specific; so when one looks at alignment of theme and required reading, many districts might consider moving some things around. Eleventh-grade ELA must focus on American literature and foundational documents in order to meet the demands of the proposed assessment model (reference the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and
Career Instructional Frameworks); perhaps aligning the American History or American Government courses for that year would open up more opportunities for overlap.

Of course, simply overlapping content or sharing resources won’t really do it. Decisions must be made as to which teacher(s)—SS? ELA? Both?—will closely examine the text with students. In which classroom will instruction be focused on literacy skills or content elaboration? If the lesson is shared, what activities will each teacher do? What are the shared or distinct assessment targets and teacher roles in preparation and evaluation? Can we develop common rubrics for certain activities, such as types of writing and presentation? Could we develop formative assessments for a combined social studies and literature unit?

What Are We Reading?

According to the ELA CCSS, all students will become proficient in reading and analyzing texts of various kinds, including the traditional textbooks, novels, and primary and secondary source documents but also emphasizing periodicals, reference materials, and technology or Web-based texts of every category. Students will also glean information from audio and video materials, and technology or Web-based texts of every category. According to the ELA CCSS, all students will become proficient in reading and analyzing texts of various kinds, including the traditional textbooks, novels, and primary and secondary source documents but also emphasizing periodicals, reference materials, and technology or Web-based texts of every category. Students will also glean information from audio and video sources for analysis, synthesis, and argumentation. This creates consternation for teachers who are uncertain about how to proceed with locating and selecting appropriate resources.

With conversation, course experts will likely discover the resources needed right within their buildings. For example, social studies texts are informational, and the tool kits are filled with documents, literary excerpts, charts and graphs, cartoons, and so on. Language arts bookrooms are full of materials that are no longer used but that might be valuable to underscore a point in history class. The technological expertise likely exists within the school staff as well.

How Are We Teaching?

Most important, though, is what we are asking students to do with text, starting with the insistence that they read it and learn from it. Social studies teachers who always love to tell the story or who insist that they teach kids to take notes from a lecture preempt the need for students to actually read the assignments from the text. Therefore, they do not learn how to do so and are blindsided by their first truly demanding course. Assigning even advanced readers George Washington’s “Farewell Address” for homework without any assistance will result in thoroughly overwhelmed and demotivated students and in frustrated teachers who resort to just telling them what it’s about anyway. We need to scaffold complex literacy skills into all of our classes so that students can become comfortable with dissecting 18th-century documents (and other challenging texts) in the future.

The big questions for social studies teachers to ask themselves are “How much do I deliver information instead of prepare students to discover it? How much detail is truly necessary to build essential concepts? How can I use my content as a medium for developing critical skills rather than as the end result? How can I use literacy development and particular texts to help deliver content? How can I ensure that I assign writing that builds their communication skills and demonstrates their content knowledge? How can I transition to more short readings, videos, writings, and presentations rather than singular large assignments and activities (i.e., the research project)?

Social studies teachers might make a professional point of learning literacy instruction strategies. There are great resources available, and exploring them goes beyond the scope of this article. It is essential to learn best practices, to isolate development of specific grade-level or advanced skills, and to plan exactly when in the curriculum to deliver explicit literacy instruction. This includes specific instruction for essential skills early in the year as well as considering and allocating time for introducing challenging texts and written assignments. It is incumbent on every teacher to understand, model, and support the internalization of independent literacy strategies.

Make a point also of using textual resources as instructional tools instead of supplements by requiring students to interact with them. Rather than (or in addition to) asking students what it might have felt like to have been at the Boston Massacre, teach them how to analyze primary accounts and to respond to what it really was like to be there and why people would have different viewpoints. It takes time, but it is certainly richer learning.

Appropriate research activities are also great catalysts for incorporating many of the ELA literacy and performance skills utilizing key social studies content and critical thinking skills. This is, again, providing that the research elements in question are explicitly instructed, scaffolded, and assessed in one or both of the classes. Saying “Go find out about X and report back” may teach students to glean discrete pieces of information but will not build their research capacity.

How Do We Support Our Advanced Learners?

As gifted advocates and educators, we seek to enrich the learning experiences of our gifted students and other advanced learners across their school days: How does this curricular overlap help serve their needs? Certainly, a sufficient discussion of the enrichment process exceeds the limits of this article, but there are a few things to keep in mind.

According to Tamra Stambaugh’s presentations (2011 OAGC Coordinator Conference and 2012 OAGC Teacher Academy) of her work with the College of William and Mary, enrichment for gifted and advanced learners will come in one of three areas. An activity or task could look more deeply at a skill or concept: that is, by studying a
particular idea using multiple applications or with varied sources, even conducting original research on that topic. In 7th-grade social studies, this could be a specific investigation of and report on various types of Roman engineering, including their impact on modern engineering practice (SS 7.2/ ELA W.7.7*). What might this look like to add depth to only the literacy part? What about keeping the depth of the history content and scaffolding literacy for an on- or below-target reader or writer?

Adding complexity involves making more connections between the featured task or content and other internal or external topics or with multiple resources or modes of performance. This shift will largely involve moving to the upper levels of Bloom’s taxonomy to involve synthesis of multiple ideas and resources to create new arguments, products, or ideas. In that same social studies class, the student could consult multiple primary documents to analyze different views on Roman imperialism (SS 7.1/2/16; ELA RI.7.9) and then compare the original views with a general treatment by the textbook or online encyclopedia and present conclusions to the class using multimedia elements (ELA W. 7.7-9; SL.7.5). These are all grade 7 social studies and ELA standards, but the task involves a more complex treatment of the material, including evaluation and presentation. What complexity could be added by incorporating elements from other disciplines? What about keeping the literacy complexity but limiting the historical complexity for an on-target student or one who struggles to understand the social studies content?

Acceleration can be a difficult prospect in a content-specific discipline like the social studies. How much sense does it make to briefly highlight foundational American history to get to the next era or the next simply because a student can learn facts quickly? Certainly there is room for compacting to allow time for individual deep or complex activities without moving ahead. Nonetheless, the ELA standards vertically align the skills, so it is very practical to look to upper-level skill requirements and complex texts for advanced readers without subsuming the actual texts of the upper grades apart from formal subject acceleration.

Now What?

It is clear that there are many critical conversations to be had. District and building leaders must allot the time for collaboration with content colleagues, especially because social studies teachers will require the time and resources to develop instructional capacity for supporting higher-level literacy and critical thinking skills. Collaboration across disciplines is also critical, and secondary ELA and social studies teachers may need to take the initiative and ask for or make the time. Together you will also discover that you have resources to share. Even if schedules or climates do not immediately allow for ideal cross-curricular integration, these critical conversations will guide and support the individual teachers. Finally, combining literacy with social studies content will yield opportunities to enrich either content or literacy or both by adding depth, complexity, or a mode of acceleration.

Ultimately, with the myriad of federal and state initiatives, including the standards, secondary-level teachers have an opportunity to reshape the nature of curricular alignment and instructional practice in order to create holistic interdisciplinary learning experiences for our students. It will require us to stretch outside of traditional comfort zones, but social studies and English language arts bring so much to the table to share—we can capitalize on that perfect match.

* The coding for ELA is Strand Abbreviation.Grade.Standard Statement, thus W.7.7 is Writing, grade 7, statement 7; Social Studies is Grade.Content Statement, thus 7.2 is grade 7, content statement 2.

References

Stambaugh, Tamra. (2011). Content-Based Curriculum for the Gifted: Adapting the Common Core. OAGC Teacher Academy, Columbus, OH.

Karen Rumley is a consultant with the Summit County Educational Service Center, specializing in secondary English Language Arts and Social Studies, as well as gifted services coordination and program evaluation. She is also the secretary of the OAGC Governing Board.

KEY STANDARDS RESOURCES

English Language Arts: Common Core State Standards Key Resources

STANDARDS DOCUMENTS

Common Core State standards Initiative: www.corestandards.org/key-resources

Appendix A (Research and Elaboration)

Appendix B (Exemplar Texts and Performance Tasks)

Appendix C (Exemplar Writing Samples)

Ohio Department of Education: www.ode.state.oh.us

Links from English Language Arts page, also including Model Curriculum & Transition Tools

Assessment: PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers): www.parcconline.org

Social Studies: Revised State Standards Key Resources

STANDARDS DOCUMENTS

Ohio Department of Education: www.ode.state.oh.us

Links from Social Studies page, also including Model Curriculum & Transition Tools
GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER NOMINATING FORM 2013

Nominations must be postmarked, e-mailed, or faxed by May 31, 2013

I nominate the following OAGC member for the position of ________________________________.

Nominee’s name _______________________________ Region ________

Mailing address ________________________________________________________________

City, State, ZIP ________________________________________________________________

Telephone (____)__________________________ E-mail ____________________________________

I agree to accept this nomination to the OAGC Governing Board. I confirm that I am currently a member of OAGC, am willing to fulfill the duties of the office, and will attend scheduled meetings.

Signature of nominee __________________________________________________________________

Date _____________________________________________________________________________

Return nominating form to       Karen Rumley, OAGC Nominating Committee
                                 9582 Minyoung Rd.
                                 Ravenna, OH 44266
                                 
                                 FAX: 330-945-6222
                                 E-mail: kerumley@centurylink.net

Nominator’s name _________________________ Telephone (____)__________________________
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS 2013

The following OAGC Governing Board positions will be elected in May 2013 to serve a two-year term of office: first vice president, Coordinator Division chair-elect, Parent Division chair, and regional representatives from Regions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. 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 May 31, 2013, or may be e-mailed or faxed to

Karen Rumley, OAGC Nominating Committee
9582 Minyoung Rd., Ravenna, OH 44266
FAX: 330-945-6222
E-mail: kerumley@centurylink.net

Duties of the first vice president:
• Oversee the standing and ad hoc committees
• Oversee the regional representatives

Duties of the treasurer:
• Accept all monies and fees of the OAGC
• Keep an accurate record of receipts and expenditures
• Make financial reports at the annual meeting and all Governing Board meetings
• Solicit budget reports from the Governing Board
• Present a proposed budget for the September 1–August 31 fiscal year for approval at the fall Governing Board meeting
• File annual IRS forms
• Serve as chair of the Finance Committee
• Pay dues to the National Association for Gifted Children and other OAGC board-approved organizations

Duties of the division chair-elect:
• Become next division chair
• Provide leadership for division programming
• Serve as liaison between the Governing Board and the division members
• Collaborate with the second vice president to support the formation and continuing operation of affiliate groups of the division
• Function as a resource person in disseminating information to the division
• Report to the second vice president

Duties of the regional representatives:
• Serve as liaison to the membership
• Function as district resource person in disseminating information
• Assist in forming new and supporting existing affiliate organizations in their region
• Report to the first vice president

Region 1 counties: Delaware, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, Union
Region 3 counties: Allen, Auglaize, Hancock, Hardin, Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, Van Wert
Region 5 counties: Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Fayette, Hamilton, Highland, Warren
Region 7 counties: Adams, Gallia, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto
Region 9 counties: Ashland, Holmes, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, Wayne
Region 11 counties: Athens, Fairfield, Hocking, Meigs, Perry, Vinton, Washington
THE ART OF GIFTED EDUCATION

By Emmy L. Partin

Why are so many gifted students in Ohio not receiving education services tailored to their needs? How can we support them to reach their full potential? These were the questions asked at the Educating Our Brightest event, hosted by the Fordham Institute and the Ohio Association for Gifted Children.

Fordham’s Checker Finn kicked off the event with a recap of the Institute’s studies of the impact of No Child Left Behind on gifted students (hint: it’s not good). He then presented findings from his recent book, Exam Schools: Inside America’s Most Selective Public High Schools (of which Ohio has four). He was quick to point out that these schools don’t serve a different population of students than their peers, nor do their teachers necessarily have different or higher credentials.

After Checker’s presentation, a panel, moderated by the Columbus Dispatch’s Jennifer Smith Richards, talked about the state of gifted education in Ohio and how to improve it. Here’s a recap of their comments:

Ann Sheldon, Executive Director, Ohio Association for Gifted Children: Ann pointed out there has been a tremendous decline in gifted services in Ohio over the past decade. Currently, just 18 percent of gifted students received specialized gifted services in our state. Ohio needs more gifted-specific schools as part of the solution.

Carol Lockhart, Principal, John Hay Early College High School: Carol says her school proves that gifted education can be done well with challenging populations—her student body is virtually 100 percent eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. And the school has incorporated blended learning as a key component of its model.

Bill Hayes, Ohio House of Representatives: He acknowledged that gifted students are underserved but reiterated that he believes the governor’s budget proposal seeks to improve gifted education in Ohio through increased funding and accountability. He agrees we need more gifted-specific schools in Ohio but also said it’s tough to get lawmakers interested in supporting issues that don’t impact their districts.

Marty Bowes, Superintendent, Perry Local Schools: Marty was honest that money is a factor: he has more gifted students than special education students in his district, yet he gets $4 million in special education funding and just $200,000 in gifted dollars. He says we need to energize our teaching force for gifted students and beyond—imagine the value of getting a 50th percentile student to the 75th? And what would happen if his valedictorian had a one-to-one gifted aide, the way that many special education students do? What could she achieve in that environment?

Checker closed the conversation with his advice about gifted education advocacy in Ohio (and nationally). Ohio is a paradox in that schools are required to identify gifted students but not to serve them—that should have the makings of a political revolution of sorts among parents. Instead, advocacy is old-fashioned and needs to catch up with more sophisticated political strategies.

Governor Kasich’s budget includes increased funding for gifted education and a bit more accountability for serving those students. But gifted advocates say the legislation can be improved—stay tuned to the Ohio Gadfly Daily for updates as the bill evolves.

This article is printed with permission from the author and the first appeared in the Ohio Gadfly Daily—a Fordham Foundation online publication.
In Bowling Green, the gifted and talented resource room is always buzzing with a flurry of activities, and this year has not been any different. Mrs. Laura Weaver is nearing the end of her first year with the Providing Acceleration, Creativity, & Enrichment (P.A.C.E.) class after the retirement of Mrs. Cheryl Francis. This year’s theme is “Immigration—the Ellis Island Simulation,” and students have been actively participating in many assignments and activities to prepare for Immigration Night on May 20. Each student has taken the identity of an immigrant from the country of his or her choice and now uses this new identity for assignments. To kick off the theme, all four classes were visited by local immigrants from Germany, Austria, China, France, and Bulgaria. We also had a guest from Poland who was visiting the United States for the first time and was a relative of one of the students. All visitors brought items from their countries and shared their stories of coming to America. Because Bowling Green State University is nearby, we have been fortunate to have many professors and parents volunteer to share their immigration stories. Parent and history professor Dr. Andrew Hershberger also shared a presentation of famed photographer Lewis Hine, whose photographs of immigrants and children in factories helped create child labor laws.

Commemorative Stamps

Researching countries began with map work and creating three-dimensional commemorative stamps of the countries. Students had to research several details about their country, learn about the characteristics of stamps, and design a postage stamp for a three-dimensional final product on canvas, using any medium to create their design. Modeling clay was a favorite among the classes, but one particular student chose a unique method of using paper tubing, holiday ornaments, and clay to recreate the architecture of Russia.

Riley S. with Russia commemorative stamp
Street Shelters

One of the challenging and enjoyable immigration activities included creating street shelters using a stack of newspapers and a roll of masking tape. Students were asked to imagine waiting for their passage from Ellis Island to their new location in the United States. Some immigrants had to wait for trains, and some had to sleep on the crowded floors of Ellis Island or on the surrounding streets. Students were advised to design a three-foot shelter that would protect them from the elements and would allow one person to sit down inside. The teams could create any kind of design as long as the structure was free standing and completed within an hour. The activity, based on an Odyssey of the Mind challenge, encouraged teamwork, while also testing construction skills and critical thinking skills. Principal Joe Morgan judged the entries, and the winners received Weaver’s Wages and bragging rights.

Winners of the 5th-grade teams: Bob W., Principal Joe M., Hallie W., Narnia R.

Some teams were not so successful, but students learned many lessons about teamwork and construction. Teams had fun with the activity despite the outcomes.

Immigration Studies

During the presidential election, the P.A.C.E. classes became actively involved in learning about immigration laws. Each student researched the history of these laws and using their notes from the immigrant class speakers, they were to write a new immigration law. Students also discussed the immigration law proposals of each presidential candidate, and class debates included taking a stance with either President Barack Obama or Mitt Romney. All submitted proposals were placed on the ballot for voting by all classes. A mock election was held in each class, and new immigration laws were decided by majority votes. The top four proposals were selected as new laws. Students enjoyed taking part in the election process as an alternative way to follow the presidential election.

Students will attend Immigration Night in period clothing and bring food dishes specific to their countries. Administrators will conduct the Ellis Island processing simulation, and families will be treated to a one-act play written and choreographed by the 5th-grade class. As part of the processing station, students will show their passports, present their identities to the processors, and use their research to make it through without being detained. Some students have opted to come to America as siblings or friends from the same country, but each has to be prepared to pass the simulation on his or her own. In addition to the international food tables, students will display projects, journals, and pictures from the year for families to enjoy.
Independent Studies began in November and were concluded in March. This year’s topics were varied, and some of the favorites included the Muppets, Hershey’s, history of popcorn, mythology, Egyptian history, natural disasters, and raccoons. Students dressed in costume and presented their Bloom’s products during an oral presentation using PowerPoint or Glogster. Each presentation required an audience participation portion and five Bloom’s products.

In January, all classes created origami snowflakes to send to Sandy Hook following the tragic shooting. The snowflakes were requested to welcome students to their new school in Newtown, Connecticut, following the holidays. We sent more than one hundred snowflakes with special messages on each for the students.

During the month of February, P.A.C.E. classes had fun with Valentine’s Day, using math and science skills. Each student participated in the “Hearty Estimator” activity, which included making an estimate of various characteristics of a package of candy hearts before opening the package. Students were asked specific questions about the hearts, how to measure various items, or how to use the hearts to measure items before actually proving their estimates or theories. The same questions were answered using the hearts and determining the actual or exact ways to use the candies to measure across the desk, spelling out words, stacking without toppling, and so on. The activity taught how to form a scientific hypothesis and how to prove it through math equations.

Two 5th-grade P.A.C.E. students were selected to serve as student ambassadors for the 2013 summer trip to western Canada. People to People ambassadors are selected through an interview process, and students have the opportunity to earn high school credit while embarking on a multicultural adventure. Bob W. and Hallie W. will be making the trip for the program this summer.

On the science side of academics, the 4th-grade class enjoyed Oobleck Day as high school teacher Gloria Gajewicz brought the goopy non-Newtonian mixture to show students the properties of solids and liquids. The students read the story of Bartholomew and the Oobleck and completed lab worksheets to observe and understand the properties of matter, as oobleck can be a solid and a liquid.

Perennial Math
On the academic side of P.A.C.E., students in grades 4 through 6 participated in Perennial Math this year. Monthly tests were given, and two students emerged as math scholars. Erik S. had perfect scores on three of the four tests, and Jordan S. was recognized for his scores on two of the four tests.

Erik and Jordan have been featured on the Web site’s Wall of Fame for perfect scores on three of the four monthly tests for the school year. Both students will receive medals and tee shirts for their academic achievement. Perennial Math is designed to challenge students and recognize their talents and skills through monthly tests and virtual math challenges.

Principal Joe M. with Perennial Math winners Erik S. (6th grade) and Jordan S. (4th grade)

Other Activities

Upcoming Lessons and Activities
Upcoming lessons and activities include building rockets and observing flight patterns; kite making and discovering characteristics of flying single string and stunt kites; and completing 100 new stems for the yearly etymology challenge. We will also have the last silent auction, where students can use their earned Weaver’s Wages to bid on educational items in the P.A.C.E. store. We are looking forward to our new residence next year as the current building will be closed and the resource room will move to another school in the district. To see more about P.A.C.E., please visit our Web site at https://sites.google.com/a/bgcs.k12.oh.us/pacers/home.
CALL FOR ARTICLES

Fall 2013 Issue of the OAGC Review

**General Call**

Please note that the deadline for articles for the Fall 2013 OAGC Review is **June 15, 2013**. While the theme for the Spring Review “Education Reform and Gifted Education,” we encourage readers to submit any article they believe will be useful to OAGC membership.

In addition, we will be accepting the following articles: teacher features, spotlight on student talent, and other regional articles of interest from all regions.

If you would like to submit an article relating to the “Education Reform and Gifted Education” theme, or if you would like to submit an article featuring a teacher, coordinator, program, or student in your region, please review the article submission guidelines on [www.oagc.com/?q=publications](http://www.oagc.com/?q=publications). 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](mailto:anngift@aol.com).