GIFTED AND 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Out of the Tree: Journeys through Bookland, by Lynn Proegler, 6
Integrating Technology into the Gifted Service Model, by Charity Preston, 8
Blogs for Teaching, by Lauren Angelone, 9
A World-Class Education: Educating for a Global Age, by Sandra Freeman, 12
A Family Guide to Credit Flexibility, by Anne Flick, 14
21st Century Skills: Leadership and Responsibility, by Pat Holcomb-Farronkopf, 19
Revisiting the Gifted in the 21st Century Task Force Report: Where Are We Now? by Eric Calvert, 22
Reflections on Parenting Moderately Gifted and Highly Gifted Children, by Jeri Millhouse, 25
Education and Excellence in Our High Schools, by Karen Rumley, 26
Twitter: The New Frontier for Gifted Education, by Jeffrey Shoemaker, 32
Virtual TAG, by Amy Bain, 33
21st Century Skills . . . For Adults, Too! by Julie Nolan, Cindy Teske and Pat Holcomb-Farronkopf, 38
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SALLY ROBERTS, President
W: 937-237-6300x3631; H: 937-698-0929
sally.roberts@huberheights.k12.oh.us
VICKIE BRIERCHECK, President-Elect
W: 330-477-4640x114; H: 330-497-4842
vghriercheck@sbcglobal.net
BARB BODART, 1st Vice President, Membership
W: 740-349-6096; H: 740-397-5459
bbodart@laca.org
ELAINE BARKAN, 2nd Vice President, Affiliates
W: 330-492-8136x377
elaineuir@aol.com
MEGGAN WEAVER, Past President
W: 937-497-2225x1316; H: 937-492-4787
weaver13@embarqmail.com
LISA FELLERS, Treasurer
W: 937-832-5900
tolisaf@verizon.net
KAREN RUMLEY, Secretary
W: 330-926-3808x502141; H: 330-298-0206
cf_rumley@cfalls.org
ANN SHELTON, Executive Director
W: 614-475-4416
anngift@aol.com
RACHEL SMENTHERS-WINTERS, Chair, Coordinator Division
W: 330-297-1436
rwinters@portage-esc.org
KAREN COOK, Chair, Teacher Division
W: 614-801-6212; H: 614-276-7687
teachbeachnc@sbcglobal.net
KATHY JACKSON, Chair, Parent Division
W: 614-468-1200; H: 614-246-0377
kjackson5383@sbcglobal.net
SUSAN RAKOW, Chair, Higher Education Division
W: 216-523-7296
susankow@earthlink.net

MARY RIZZA, Interim Editor,
H: 419-842-4375, mary.rizza@yahoo.com
ANN SHELTON, Executive Director
W: 614-475-4416, anngift@aol.com
BETH PRATT, Layout Editor
H: 740-664-1807, prathb@ohio.edu
RICK HUARD, Proofreader
H: 740-589-7079, huard@ohio.edu

The OAGC REVIEW is published four times each year: spring, summer, fall and winter. The deadlines for submission of items are February 15, May 15, June 15 and November 15, respectively. Deadlines for advertising submissions are February 1, May 1, August 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.
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
By Sally Roberts

Remember February? Blankets of snow, school delays and closings, gray days, cabin fever, a longing for sun and spring—even though we know that spring will bring more storms. I often think of Annie, her resilience, perseverance and belief: "Stuck with a day that’s gray and lonely, I stick out my chin and grin and say the sun will come out tomorrow." As expressed in that signature song, gifted children and their advocates have long hoped and worked toward the day when the sun will come out and bring with it with mandated gifted services for all identified students. Ohio’s gifted children have already waited for too many tomorrows: they need opportunities to develop their gifts today. This spring, as sun and rain melt away the layers of snow, will gifted children find educational treasure or more potholes and mud?

The Ohio Evidence-Based Model (outlined in HB 1) provided for phased-in increases in gifted funding and a four-factor analysis for funding allocation: gifted coordinator, gifted intervention specialist, identification and professional development. It looked like a brighter day. However, the change from the SF3 reports (which clearly categorized funding for coordinators, GIs, and identification) to PASS (in which gifted funding is a lump sum) has led to unexpected changes in the way some districts are using funds for gifted education. In her February 16, 2010, e-mail newsletter, State Superintendent Deborah Delisle expressed her concern over this practice, “We have learned that in some instances, districts are reassigning gifted teachers and coordinators, reducing their hours, or eliminating their positions. ODE understands that the legislative intent for the gifted funding methodology in HB 1 for FY 2010-11 is to protect gifted services through this transition period at the same funding level that the state supported gifted education in FY 2009, and that these funds are to be used for certified gifted staff.” She went on to say, “I urge you to consider this [intent] as you determine your district’s gifted staffing and service levels for the next school year.” When Delisle spoke at the October OAGC Annual Fall Conference, she pledged that gifted services for Ohio’s children would not diminish “under my watch.” Her statement is a step toward fulfilling that pledge.

The ODE has established a gifted advisory committee to make recommendations for changes to the funding section of Operating Standards for Identifying and Serving Gifted Students to reflect the intent of HB 1. The OAGC will be diligently working to effect language changes that will support exemplary gifted services for Ohio’s gifted children. The ODE will also be establishing performance indicators for gifted students as required in HB 1.

Soon, the OAGC presidency will pass to the capable hands of Vickie Briercheck and her leadership team. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as OAGC president and to work with so many wonderful people who care about the needs of gifted children. I have full confidence that Vickie and the governing board will continue to work with the ODE and with Ohio legislators to keep the critical issues of funding and service for gifted children a top priority...and bring the promise of tomorrow to fruition.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE
By Mary Rizza

I am so happy to serve as the interim editor for the Review. It is my hope that during this transition period between editors, I may continue the good work already established and somehow move us forward. What better topic to mark this transition than 21st Century Skills!

We have a great line-up of authors this month, each of whom brings the gifted perspective to an initiative that will impact all students. In this issue you will hear from our division chairs, who generally agree that we need better gifted education and we have this initiative to help districts understand the true definition of 21st century skills. Also in this issue, we hear a few technology minded folks who enlighten us on a new opportunity to apply in the classroom. We will continue to focus each month on using technology and encourage you to submit descriptions of your activities and projects.

Longtime readers may see a change in format for some of our articles. We are hoping to include more articles about best practices that are research based. I encourage you to submit longer articles about interventions that are supported by research on how students learn. I have also instituted a slightly different review process for submissions. As the authors this month learned, each article submitted was read by me and a member of the publications committee who reviewed the submission for consistency and flow (i.e., grammar and readability). A final copy of the article, with changes or questions, was sent to the author for resubmission. I am happy to report that, for the most part, this new process was well received by our authors, and I hope that it has resulted in a quality product.

Next, I would like to draw your attention to our newest column called Ask the Experts. Each month we will highlight a different question, invite a new facilitator to give a brief overview and collect responses from experts in grades K-12 across Ohio. This month we tackled the concept of friendship in the lives of gifted students. The author notes that we have far too many responses to print, so if you don’t see a response, check the full version on the Review section of the OAGC Web site. I mention this new column, not because I tried to lead by example, but because we need additional facilitator volunteers. If you have an idea for a topic or just want to contribute on one of our ideas, please let us know.

In closing, I hope that you will become involved in all we do at the OAGC, but particularly with regard to the Review. We welcome your comments and suggestions but most importantly your article submissions. I will be happy to work with any new authors on their topics or to provide initial editing of your work. I am happy to accept drafts, if you are willing to make the effort.
With luck, as you read this the warm April sun will have coaxed a few early blooming flowers to emerge from your garden. While Ohio citizens are used to certain level of winter weather, this year has seemed particularly brutal. Likewise, many school district budgets seem to be suffering from a wintry mix of staff cuts and service reductions. At the very heart of education funding is the question of whether Ohio’s economy will spring back to life soon. If not, what will happen in the next biennial budget? Believe it or not, work has already begun on the 2012–13 budget. Between the upcoming budget, the Race to the Top process, the Ohio School Funding Advisory Council and the newly released draft of the Common Core Standards, there is a good deal of education activity in Ohio. And do not forget, we have a little thing called the gifted operating standards that needs to be revised as well. These are just the state-level issues. In addition, we are dealing with Javits consolidation (that is, cuts) at the federal level along with a new Equity in Excellence bill, 13 (Investing in Innovation) Grants and a new study that points out the high-end achievement gap. To top it all off, the looming state elections that could usher new leadership into both the governor’s office and the Ohio House are causing considerable angst at the district level. Here is a rundown of state and national policy issues before us.

Ohio Policy Issues

Ohio School Funding Advisory Council Forges Ahead. Despite cancellation of a meeting because of snow in February, the Ohio School Funding Advisory Council (OSFAC) has met several times in the past three months. The council agreed to break into subcommittees and voted in the March 1 meeting to add several outside members. The Special Needs subcommittee added four members on the basis of content-area expertise. Representatives from the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Students with Disabilities, the Ohio Association for Gifted Children, the Ohio Department of Education English as a Second Language (ESL) Advisory Committee and the Ohio Coalition for Quality Schools were invited to be part of the subcommittee. The subcommittee is expected to make recommendations for improvements to the Ohio Evidence-Based Model (OEBM) funding system by August 2010. This is a huge opportunity to fine-tune the gifted funding formula and related accountability measures. All documents from the Special Needs subcommittee will be posted at www.ogc.com/?q=schoolfundingcouncil. Readers may wish to download the excellent presentation on the final OEBM formulas from the March 1 full council meeting. For all information pertaining to the Ohio School Funding Advisory Council, please go to the official Web site, http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Tempates/Pages/SFAC/ODESfac.aspx?page=673.

E-mail from Superintendent Delisle Regarding the HB 1 Gifted Formula. As confusion over the new gifted funding formula continues among the districts, Superintendent Deborah Delisle used her weekly e-mail to school district superintendents to clarify the new provisions in House Bill 1. In her February 16 e-mail, Delisle wrote, “During the past several weeks, we have received information from district personnel regarding changes being made at the local level to gifted programs. We have learned that in some instances, districts are reassigning gifted teachers and coordinators, reducing their hours, or eliminating their positions. ODE understands that the legislative intent for the gifted funding methodology in HB 1 for FY 2010–11 is to protect gifted services through this transition period at the same funding level that the state supported gifted education in FY 2009, and that these funds are to be used for certified gifted staff. The intent was to give districts time during this transition period to plan for future EBM funding levels. Once fully phased in, the EBM will provide higher levels of funding to most districts for services to identified gifted students. I urge you to consider this as you determine your district’s gifted staffing and service levels for the next school year.

“In the coming months, ODE will be working to establish gifted spending and reporting requirements as provided in HB 1. In addition, HB 1 requires that a performance indicator be established reflecting the level of services provided to, and the performance of, gifted students. Please continue to work with your district gifted personnel to ensure a smooth transition for your gifted program as we all transition to the EBM. A successful transition during FY 2010–11 is critical to ensuring that your district will be prepared to meet the expectations set forth in HB 1 for gifted education in Ohio.”

In a response to reporters’ questions about the new gifted funding formula a week later, Governor Ted Strickland stated, “The gifted population is one of the most neglected in our schools.” He indicated that to fail to address their needs would be to ignore the state’s best talent “at our own peril.” The governor went on to note that Delisle has a background in gifted education and is married to a national authority on the subject. “I was aware of her concern for gifted education when I urged her selection as state superintendent,” he said.

Ohio State Board of Education. As part of the budget preparation process, the Ohio State Board of Education has been inviting education stakeholders to present a high-level overview of their organizational mission and budget priorities for the next biennial budget. The Ohio Association for Gifted Children has been invited to present its views to the board on April 13, 2010.

Ohio Gifted Advisory Council. The Ohio Department of Education invited over 20 associations to take part of the newly reconstituted gifted advisory council. The Ohio Association for Gifted Children was invited to nominate two members to the council. The purpose of the council is to provide input as the ODE begins to write the rules to shape the new gifted funding
formula as well as the performance indicator. No meetings have been scheduled to date. The other organizations invited to be part of the council include

- Buckeye Association of School Administrators
- Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools
- Ohio Association for Gifted Children
- Governing Board Representative
- Ohio Association for Private Colleges of Teacher Education
- Ohio Association for Supervision, Curriculum and Development
- Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators
- Ohio Association of Pupil Services Administrators
- Ohio Association of School Business Officials
- Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators
- Ohio Board of Regents
- Ohio Coalition for Quality Education
- Ohio Education Association
- Ohio Education Service Center Association
- Ohio Federation of Teachers
- Ohio Parent Teacher Association
- Ohio Parent Teacher Organization
- Ohio School Boards Association
- Ohio School Psychologists Association
- Ohio State Support Team
- State Board of Education
- The Ohio Eight Coalition

Race to the Top. By now, most of you should be aware that Ohio is a finalist for Race to the Top (RTTT) grants from the federal government. All finalists presented their cases to the U.S. Department of Education during the week of March 15. Although critics of the Ohio RTTT application have been numerous, the funds certainly would have been welcome to shore up the declining staff levels at both the Ohio Department of Education and participating districts.

Ohio Academic Standards. The new Ohio math and reading standards have been put on hold because of the Race to the Top application requirement that the Common Core Standards be adopted by any state wishing to apply (see below). However, the ODE has continued to move forward on science and social studies standards. A draft of these standards is posted on the ODE Web site at www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Template/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?Page=3&TopicRelationID=1696&ContentType=76764. The ODE is seeking input on the standards. Please review the draft and offer comments at the above link.

Common Core Standards. The latest draft of the Common Core Standards was released in early March. Although this is a federal initiative, Ohio already has agreed as part of its Race to the Top application to adopt the core standards. To view the standards, please go www.corestandards.org/Standards/K-12. Feedback on the standards is due by early April 2010.

Investing in Innovation (13). The U.S. Department of Education released the final requirements for the $650 million Investing in Innovation (13) program. First-tier applicants for 13—the second of two federal education initiatives that include state-level Race to the Top awards—must reflect "strong" research and may include districts and nonprofits. The innovation award will assign competitive grants of up to $55 million each, depending on supporting evidence. "Scale-up" grants, as lead awards are called, will range up to $50 million and require the clearest documentary evidence based on a controlled sample of students. Second-phase "validation" grants of up to $30 million will fund programs with "moderate" evidence, while "development" grants will offer a "reasonable" hypothesis and may support other first- and second-tier projects. It is unclear whether Ohio will be applying for one of these grants.

NATIONAL POLICY ISSUES

Javits Funding in Jeopardy (Once Again). Different year, different president, same old story: President Barack Obama's budget calls for the consolidation of several small programs including the Javits gifted and talented fund. Consolidation means, effectively, that the program is cut. The president's budget calls for the consolidation of Advanced Placement funding as well as the Robert Byrd Honors Scholarships. For more information, please go to www.nagc.org.

Mind the (Other) Gap Report. A new report conducted by the University of Indiana shows that the gap between high-achieving minority, LEP (Limited English Proficient), economically disadvantaged students and their white, English-speaking peers is growing at an alarming rate. The full report can be accessed at the OAGC Web site along with a breakout of the statistics for Ohio. The link is www.oagc.com/?q=advocacyupdates. This important research quantifies the devastating results of state and national policies aimed only at proficiency levels of student achievement.

Equity in Excellence Act. On March 8, 2010, new federal legislation was introduced to combat the growing high-achievement gap. Sens. Christopher Dodd (CT) and Charles Grassley (IA) introduced S 3086, a bill to provide grants to school districts to close the achievement gap for high-ability students. For more information, please go to www.nagc.org.

To keep abreast of all advocacy news, please sign up for the Ohigift listserv or the GTADVOCATE loop. E-mail GTADVOCATE@aol.com directly to sign up for advocacy news. If you prefer to sign up for Ohigift, please e-mail artsnyder44@cs.com for directions. You may also e-mail me directly at anngift@aol.com, and I will make sure 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.

Do you tweet? For breaking news, follow me at www.twitter.com/anngift.


This article may be reprinted in local OAGC affiliate publications.
OUT OF THE TREE

JOURNEYS THROUGH BOOKLAND

By Lynn Proegler

While packing to move, I came across a set of books that I have had since I was a kid. It’s called Journeys through Bookland. It was published in 1909 (long before I was born) and given to me by my grandparents. The set was put together to teach parents how to teach their children to read and to understand life through literature, including novels, short stories, poetry and even nursery rhymes. After each selection are suggestions for parents to help their children think through what they have just read. (Hmm. Sounds a lot like what we call bibliography.)

I remember putting these books to good use when Eric and Lara, my two oldest children (now adults and parents themselves), were teenagers. One of their chores was doing the supper dishes, a task through which they bickered every night. No treat was sufficient to make them stop bickering. So I started to read aloud to them as they washed and dried. Although they moaned and groaned at first, eventually—even when the dishes were done—the kids wanted to sit with me until I finished the story. Funny the effect good literature has on people.

I started with The Story of Aladdin. Did you know that this story takes place in China, not in India? We have become accustomed to the Disneyfication of our literature, in which every story has a handsome or beautiful main character, an evil villain (who is also slightly ridiculous, so as not to be too scary), a comical sidekick for the hero or villain (to be voiced by some wise-cracking Hollywood type like Billy Crystal or Robin Williams), a rollicking jingle or haunting theme that will run through everyone’s head to utter distraction and a bunch of characters that can be incorporated into a Happy Meal® in a set of no fewer than five—one free each week—and some kind of overall display or holder if you “get all five” (or pay $1.98 while supplies last). It’s worth it to go to the source, the original story, to see what made these tales classics in the first place.

After Aladdin we moved on to The Swiss Family Robinson—an absolutely charming tale of survival, ingenuity, creativity and practical family life. And the language is beautiful. We proceeded through Aesop’s Fables and the stories of Hans Christian Andersen. (Did you know that Andersen came from a very dysfunctional family? His father was largely absent and his mother was careless and neglectful. He was an ugly, lonely, strange child, made fun of and shunned by other children. Gee, I always thought he was Danny Kaye.) I remember that when I was very young, I was particularly taken by the story of “The Ugly Duckling.” What a great comfort it was to know that the oddball eventually grew into a beautiful swan. (Is there a lesson here?)

Also included were many Bible stories and tales of mythology from all cultures. Many of these stories have references and applications relevant to contemporary society. If our children do not know this literature, they are ignorant of that which made us who we are today.

My son and my husband are gamers. That is, they sit in front of their computers and take part in wild adventures using fantastic creatures representing their alter egos. (Gee, does my husband really think he looks like that?) I communicate with my daughters through phone calls. John keeps up with what is going on in our son’s life through comments made while the two of them, sitting 60 miles apart, battle hideous monsters with cohorts who are playing in Switzerland, Australia, Africa, Germany and all over the world. (Are you familiar with World of Warcraft?) While I think this is great for two grown men, one retired and one who solves computer software problems all over the country all day, I’m not sure this is the best use of much of the free time for our children.

I am rereading the Journeys through Bookland books, and rediscovering the literary heritage that perhaps informs John and Eric as they battle unbelievably ugly bad guys. I know that these stories informed me as I battled the more common challenges in my real (not virtual) life. It’s amazing how often in these stories seemingly weak or helpless characters get out of impossible situations or outsmart their enemies and triumph by using cleverness and creative thought. Not many are saved by fairy godmothers or super heroes. Here is a partial list of the treasures in this series: Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes; Aesop’s Fables; Robinson Crusoe; Grimm’s Fairy Tales; The Swiss Family Robinson; Beowulf; Tom, the Water Baby; A Child’s Garden of Verses; the stories of Hans Christian Andersen; mythology of Rome, Greece, China, Japan, India, Africa, American Indians, and Norse tales; Bible stories such as David and Goliath, the story of Queen Esther and many others; The Travels of Baron Munchausen (check this one out before you read it to kids); Gulliver’s Travels; Nathaniel Hawthorne’s stories. You get the idea.

Do you remember that scene in Gone with the Wind, when the Yankees were threatening and Melanie and Scarlett and a bunch of women sat around sewing while Melanie read aloud? This was the forerunner of TV today. (I am always knitting or sewing while the TV reads me a story.) Why not try reading aloud with your kids? They could even take turns reading while you and the others listen. Or you could threaten them with having to listen to you read Tales from the Arabian Nights if they misbehave. It sure beats listening to them bicker. *TS*
Northwestern University's Midwest Academic Talent Search (NUMATS) is an empowering and inspiring experience for bright students who want to challenge themselves.

"I feel that taking the EXPLORE®, ACT® and SAT® tests early on has really helped me become the student I am today."

- NUMATS alum and a 2009 Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology winner

Don't let your students miss out!

Contact us immediately for more information about NUMATS, our above-grade-level testing program where highly successful students in grades 3 through 9 take the EXPLORE, ACT or SAT tests years ahead of schedule.

www.ctd.northwestern.edu/numats
847/491-3782 extension 3

Center for Talent Development®
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
School of Education & Social Policy
INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY INTO THE GIFTED SERVICE MODEL

By Charity Preston

Technology has become the new buzzword in educational settings everywhere, from public and private school districts to institutions of higher learning. The presence of computers, interactive whiteboards and iPods has made learning for students of today markedly different from learning for students of my generation. Access to the world via the Internet is available to most, even those with limited income. Information is at the fingertips of students who may not even know how to tie their shoes, let alone know how to spell the word "technology." By using the resources we now have at our disposal, we are able to open a new type of learning for our best and brightest.

Who will benefit?

All participants, direct and indirect, will benefit from using technology in providing gifted services. Gifted intervention specialists will be able to work with many more students, even if they are not centrally located. Regular education teachers will have an additional avenue of differentiation for enrichment. Student progress reports and work samples will be accessible to parents from home or places of employment. Most important, gifted students will be drawn to interactive social learning.

What are some resources?

The following resources could be used in a gifted program model:

Flip cameras: These are small, one-button video cameras. Most contain internal memory and are able to record video and sound, which then may be uploaded to a computer for common viewing.

WebQuests: Anyone with access to a computer and an Internet connection can find a WebQuest. Many are free from various educational clearinghouses. They can be found by typing in a specific topic, along with the search term “free webquest” in a search engine.

Blogs: Blogging has been a great way for students to get their thoughts out and have an informal discussion about a chosen topic. After the student posts a blog, others have the opportunity to comment and add their own insights.

Podcasts: With access to a computer and free downloadable software, students are able to record a message and put it onto a Web site for others to hear. Teachers can use podcasts created by others to add another avenue to meet student learning styles.

Wikis: Wikis are best known as a “Wikipedia” outlet. This format works well for group projects: student groups have a topic and can add and edit their wiki site to create a visual product for others to add and edit.

Open-source courseware: There are many free programs that allow teachers to set up online learning classes. This resource does need a bit of technical assistance to set it up, but it can be managed by teaching staff after the initial setup is complete.

Distance video conferencing: Many classrooms are using Skype or webcams to broadcast to other classrooms across the country (and to the world). Another option (if funds are available) is distance video conferencing equipment that brings a clearer, better-quality sound and picture.

One-to-one laptop initiatives: Though still not mainstream, one-to-one student laptop programs are starting to be heard of more in the K–12 setting. Having laptops for each child makes availability to other technology resources much less of a challenge.

Why would this benefit gifted students?

Collaborative learning without boundaries is the highlight of this learning model. Allowing students to communicate and work through ideas with peers not in propinquity is paramount. Doors that were previously closed will now be open with various options and guidelines. By engaging these information-driven students, we will also be able to promote critical thinking, a skill that sometimes can be missed in regular education classrooms. Gifted students, in particular, will warm to the idea of creating public displays of work for all (invited) to see and critique. By following the Ohio Technology Standards (http://www.ohio.gov/ohio Exit), teachers will include accountability and appropriate media literacy lessons.

Resources that were once rare are now becoming commonplace to most students outside of school. Gifted students can and should be exposed to as much technology as possible in order to nurture their curiosity and academic needs.


Charity L. Preston is currently working as a gifted intervention specialist with Sandusky City Schools.
Blogs for Teaching

HOW CAN THE RESEARCH ON BLOGS, LEARNING AND GENDER HELP TEACHERS IMPLEMENT BLOGS THOUGHTFULLY IN THE CLASSROOM?

By Lauren Angelone

After I created my own personal blog and a blog for a course I teach, I began to delve into research on the topic. I have gained some insight into what it means to blog and to use blogs for learning, particularly as a female. I believe that blogs have potential as a tool for girls and women to learn about their identity, topics of interest, how to belong to a community and so on. Can girls and women increase their power by using blogs? Or are they unable to escape the power structures that have shaped their roles as a disenfranchised group in society?

A blog is, very generally, a log kept on the Web that is social in nature (Bell 2007; Lovink 2008; Retberg 2008; Serfaty 2004). This log can take many forms, however, and from a multiple-literacies perspective (Abdullah 1997; Livingstone 2004), this medium—in other new media—is changing the nature of reading and writing, making the genre even more difficult to define. Blogs serve a variety of purposes (Bar-Ilan n.d.; Boulos, Maramba & Wheeler 2006; Instone 2005; Retberg 2008; Sweetser 2008) from the professional to the personal and include hybrid forms that push the boundary between public and private. For example, a personal blog about one’s life bleeds into one’s work life and then is presented publicly on the Internet. What do public and private mean in this situation? And how is it relevant for the use of blogs in education? If learning is the primary goal of education, then public and private should not be treated as dichotomous. Is it possible for teachers to ask students to check their private lives at the door? I don’t think so.

Blogs, as a form of social media, seem to resonate with several learning theories and constructs (Boyd 2008). The use of blogs by an individual, regardless of the content, implies participation in a social process. This social process is Vygotskian in that it allows individuals to learn socially with peers online and offline as well as with tools (Vygotsky & Cole 1978). The social process can be extended to include learning the rules and usage of tools as the blogger makes her way toward full membership in the community (Lave & Wenger 1991; Yang 2009). As the blogger learns by participating, the community itself also learns by producing knowledge (Brown, Collins & Duguid 1989; Lorigio, Cesareni & Schwartz 2008; Paavola, Lipponen & Hakkarainen 2004). This knowledge can be a new and innovative mediating artifact in the form of the blog itself or new information as part of the blog.

This sort of learning is often discussed in informal learning communities, as that is where much research has been done (Lave & Wenger 1991). Formal learning communities may struggle to use blogs (Instone 2005; Kerawalla, Minocha, Kirkup & Conole 2009; Nicholas n.d.) because the school context is often antithetical to the playful, open, free and intellectually risky nature of blogs (Penrod 2007). On a blog, people are participating in a real community and are able to play with ideas that they or the community may find interesting. Shoveling blogs into formal settings will take away the aspects that make them mediated learning artifacts. Perhaps teachers and administrators in formal learning contexts may find it necessary to stretch their reach to include informal contexts as authentic learning (Dewey 1966) or learning that “counts” rather than the other way around—fitting the square peg of blogging (and other new media) into the round hole of the classroom. The verb “implement,” often used when referring to technology, describes this awkward process well.

How can teachers take advantage of these learning experiences without exploiting them? Teachers should keep this question in mind as they use blogs or any new media. An informal approach may be best. Teachers can encourage girls to begin their own blogs at home and then, at various points in the year, allow them to use those blogs to bring together their home life and school life. Teachers also should encourage those girls to share with one another, to build a community and to pursue their own interests while creating knowledge on a topic. I dislike the word “encourage” because of its passiveness, but it’s sometimes better to be vague than overly deterministic. Teachers know their students and their contexts better than researchers do.

Girls dominate the blogosphere (Lenhart, Madden & Smith 2007; Nowson & Oberlander 2006), but women dominate the niche of personal blogs rather than the whole sphere (Pedersen & Macafee 2007; Schier, Koppel, Argaman & Pennebaker 2006). Teens represent themselves realistically (Huffaker 2005), as do women who write personal blogs, but women are also more likely than men are to use a pseudonym. Anonymity is one way in which a blog can embolden a blogger to say things she might not typically say (Amir-Ebrahimi 2008; Sornolu 2007). Females also use blogs and the Internet for personal and social reasons more often than males (Bortree 2005; Guadagno 2008; Nowson & Oberlander 2006; Pedersen & Macafee 2007; Schier et al. 2006). Though more research needs to be conducted, the blog, as a medium, is attractive to females, and they use it in personal or social ways. Particularly in fields such as math, science and technology from which women historically have been excluded, blogs could become a means of bringing them back in. Because blogs allow for reflection, identity formation and community building, they may help females to transform these masculinized fields. A word of caution, however: because technologies have been historically masculine (Margolis & Fisher 2002; Mercier, Barron & O’Connor 2006), teachers should pay attention to the ways in which they are designed and then used by students and be vigilant that they are not being used to reinscribe inequalities.
Adolescents are at a transitional state of identity formation, and blogs (and other new media) are a tool that they use to present themselves to an audience, that is, to construct identity (Bell 2007; Bortree 2005; Boyd 2007; Penrod 2007; Rettinger 2008; Turkle 1984, 1995). Because a blogger has no physical body on the Internet, she is able to write herself into being in a much more complex way that may allow readers a more thorough understanding of the person without the distraction of a physical body. This may be particularly important for girls, whose bodies are a locus of societal control and pressure (Butler 1990). Girls and women participate in communities in which they can find affirmation in others as well as a collaborative construction of identity (Serfaty 2004).

Blogs are a way for complex individuals to understand inequalities of the social structure by giving the underrepresented a voice and a space to broadcast that voice to a larger audience. In this way, female bloggers, who might otherwise have no outlet for expression, are able to share their experiences with an invisible but vast audience. On the other hand, a critical theorist may also say that the blogs will only inevitably reinsert the dominant in a new way (Bernstein 1977; Bourdieu 1977). In either case, I agree with critical pedagogues such as McLaren (1997) and Mohanty (1997) who argue that teachers must teach students to be critical of all technologies and the power structures in which they are situated.

“Teachers need to learn to recognize those internalized discourses that not only inform the ritualization of their teaching practices, but those that organize their vision of the future. They must recall, too, that human agency is not a substrate that prop them up like the crutches in a Dalí painting, but has imperative force. The theater of agency is possibility” (McLaren 1997, 533). Regardless of power structures, blogs afford teachers and students the agency to chip away at inequalities for girls.

References


Lauren Angellone is a doctoral student in educational technology at Ohio State University. She is a former middle school science teacher and an avid blogger.
Coordinator Corner, Spring 2010

By Rachel Smothers-Winters

As I watch my soon-to-be-13-year-old simultaneously chat and play video games with friends on X-Box Live, research the effect of music on the radishes he’s growing for the science fair on the Internet via his iPod Touch and answer the questions about that girl he keeps mentioning in conversation that I fire at him just to see if he’s listening, I think of how complex his world is and how different from the world that I knew when I was his age.

But does it matter? Is his multitasking all that different from a typical day as a gifted coordinator: answering voice mail messages, answering e-mail messages, flipping through files for that one particular article to post on the Web site/share with a parent/use as a basis for a presentation in an hour, checking the calendar to confirm the time of the next acceleration committee meeting? Perhaps I should have begun this article with the old adage, “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” For we in gifted education sometimes look askance at these “new” 21st Century Skills and think, “We’ve been doing that. Our students have led us to do those things; they have been driving the curriculum for us with their intense interests, their constant questions, their need to know more. We’ve been problem solving, encouraging innovation and creativity, teaching them to analyze information all along.” What a wonderful opportunity for gifted education professionals to lead the way in teaching others to embrace the roller-coaster ride that will be the 21st century classroom.

How is your OAGC Coordinator Division set to assist you with this opportunity? Your Resource Committee and Communications Committee continue to revise and update the new coordinator handbook, available through the coordinator page on the OAGC Web site. The Resource Committee is also compiling a list of resources on various topics, including credit flexibility, to be made available on the coordinator Web page. The Professional Development Committee is working on projects generated by survey results from the December Coordinator Workshop, and they would love to hear from you.

We welcome you, in the spirit of the 21st Century Skills of communication and collaboration, to contact your regional delegates to the Coordinator Division and to volunteer to be part of one of our committees. Contact any of your Coordinator Division Leadership Team:

Rachel Smothers-Winters, chair: rmowers@portage-esc.org
Julie McDonald, chair-elect and Region 2 delegate: jmcdonald@ecs.k12.oh.us
Tracy Quatrone, past chair: tracy.quatrone@bccc.org
Sue Buchert, secretary: sbuchert@dulcy.stark.k12.oh.us
Dr. Sharon Hall, Professional Development Committee chair and Region 9 delegate: shalle@akron.k12.oh.us
Deb Jackson, Communications Committee chair and Region 3 delegate: jacksond@hardinesc.org
Patty Bernhard and Sue Eckler, Resource Committee co-chairs: Patty.bernhard@darke.k12.oh.us and Sue.Eckler@beavercreek.k12.oh.us
Pat Farrekrkopf, Region 1 delegate: patricia_farrekrkopf@woltemberg.k12.oh.us
Marjorie Greenwood, Region 4 delegate: greenwood225@ubsglobal.net
Amy Bain, Region 5 delegate: bain.als@cole.org
Lynn Thacker, Region 6 delegate: lynn.thacker@marioncity.k12.oh.us
Karen Rohde, Region 8 delegate: krkohde@berea.k12.oh.us
Maggie Massen, Region 9 delegate: mmassen@barberton.summit.k12.oh.us
Sherry Long, Region 10 delegate: shlong@laca.org
Peggy Clifford and Becky Osburn, Region 11 delegates: p Clifford@seorec.org and regburn@loganohio.k12.oh.us
Cathy Coen, Region 12 delegate: cathycoen@neonun.org

Your division is ready to meet the changes that a new century brings and is cheerfully anticipating meeting them together with you. But now I must leave you... My son wants me to look at something on his iPod. Happy spring!

Rachel Smothers-Winters is the chair of the OAGC Coordinator Division.

General training sites:
www.polycom.com
www.elluminate.com
http://live.classroom20.com/
www.skype.com
www.ooVoo.com
www.itunes.com
www.delicious.com
www.flickr.com
www.zoo-m.com/flickr-storm/
www.voicethread.com
prezi.com/presentation application
www.YouTube.com
www.MetaCafe.com
www.Blip.tv

For blogs, search:
www.c rubbing.com
www.teachertube.com
www.knowledgex.com

iTunes Podcasting:
www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts

Especially useful:
www.podcasting.com

Ohio area:
www.ohiogifted.org

Links compiled by Douglas Sebring:
www.Rever.com
www.livestream.com/cognobics
www.wordle.com
www.teachertube.com
www.google.com
www.linkedin.com
www.twitter.com
www.secondlife.com
www.iste.com
www.jingproject.com/
A World-Class Education
EDUCATING FOR A GLOBAL AGE
By Sandra Freeman

Howard Gardner, in *Five Minds for the Future* (2007), identifies the respectful mind as the awareness of and appreciation for differences among human beings. Gardner asks what we might aspire to, given the complexity and diversity of our multinational, multilingual and multicultural world. While many invoke tolerance of our differences, Gardner favors the concept of respect, which includes not only acceptance but also the valuing of others.

**How Do We Become World Educators?**
One place to begin our quest for best practices in global education is to look to the world itself—that is, to examine what other countries are doing in educating their own students to become citizens of the global society.

Most European countries start a first foreign language in the elementary grades, and many are increasing their requirements for second foreign languages. China, for example, has made English its second language and has begun teaching it starting in the primary grades. China also is developing an international focus in its schools. Education leaders study education practices in other countries. Teachers are encouraged to study abroad, and schools are strongly encouraged to form sister-school partnerships with schools in other countries, including the United States. Australian schools teach about Asia in a systematic way, and 23 percent of all students learn an Asian language. South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan developed master plans for high-speed computers in schools as a means of connecting.

The Ohio International Education Advisory Committee has developed an international education rubric for Ohio schools to evaluate the degree to which they are preparing students to take their place in the interconnected world of the 21st century and to develop a plan for the future. Categories of competence include:

**Global context**
- public awareness
- community and business connections
- personal connections

**Global content**
- world-class curriculum
- comprehensive world language programs
- knowledge of world geography, cultures and issues
- cocurricular activities
- professional development

**Global thinkers**
- 21st century skills

**Global systems**
- leadership

**Schools and Administrators**

If we want to expand our students' global literacy, we need teachers who believe global education is critical and urgent and who are knowledgeable about the international dimensions of their subject areas. Teachers can teach only what they know—from study, from travel, from...
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A 21ST CENTURY GIFTED COORDINATOR

By Rebecca Osborn

In reviewing the expected student outcomes of the 21st Century Skills, nothing speaks to gifted education like the Learning and Innovation Skills section. I have to chuckle, because what just recently has been designated a necessity for all students has been the foundation for instruction in gifted education for decades. Over the last 15 years, I have found that these learning and innovation skills are needed not only by gifted students but also by educators working with them. Day in and day out, creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication and collaboration are my “modi operandi” as a gifted coordinator. I could not survive in my job without these skills.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

How have I been creative and innovative lately? Let me count the ways . . .

- Reworking our old one-day-a-week pull-out program into an everyday gifted class set up in grades 5 and 6
- Piloting a self-contained 4th-grade gifted classroom for the 2009–10 school year
- Implementing AP Talks in an effort to recruit and maintain enrollment in new and established Advanced Placement courses
- Scheduling an annual art workshop for students identified as gifted in the visual arts—with no transportation and a shoestring budget
- Redesigning recruitment techniques to keep gifted high school freshmen from dropping our TAG classes now that there will be no weighted credit connected to them (right now the class is at absolute capacity)

CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

When the only thing guaranteed in gifted education is change, I have to be ready to analyze situations and develop solutions at a moment’s notice . . .

- Disseminating information and initiating planning for the current credit flexibility initiative
- Identifying the appropriate staff for gifted services for 2010–11 as my district deals with hiring limitations caused by fiscal cuts
- Analyzing the gifted language arts curriculum materials to find items to fill an identified gap in our instructional continuum
- Reviewing testing materials to see what identification tools will most accurately find the talent of our student population
- Figuring ways to keep gifted education in the spotlight when we are just one small piece of the big district picture

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

Sharing information fosters a sense of community and cooperation that is invaluable in my role . . .

- Revamping the gifted Web site to offer another way for district staff, students and parents to access critical information and resources
- Collaborating with a team of high school and district staff as well as current and former LHS students to hold our fourth annual Poetry Out Loud Contest
- Working with gifted high school students, many of whom I have known since the 4th grade, on scholars events and college applications (in a huge success story this year, a most talented senior was accepted at Yale)
- Assisting a teacher new to working with gifted students on implementing projects by offering to plan the projects with her and monitor students during their extra research and work time
- Creating handouts for high school level gifted and AP courses to help inform students and their families of the benefits of taking these more challenging courses

I fully believe that these particular 21st century skills are a necessity for everyone involved in education—students, administrators and educators alike. I feel extremely fortunate to be working in a field that puts the skills of learning and innovation in the forefront of what we do, for it has forced me to continue to develop and refine myself. I am confident that our gifted students, their teachers and this coordinator will be ahead of the game as we move to the 21st Century Skills model in the Logan-Hocking Schools.

Rebecca Osborn is the gifted coordinator for the Logan-Hocking Schools.


Sandra Freeman is the gifted coordinator for Western Buckeye Educational Service Center.
A FAMILY GUIDE TO CREDIT FLEXIBILITY

By Anne Flick

Credit flexibility allows students to learn from different people and resources at different sites, all under the supervision of a certified teacher. Certified professional teachers will remain central to the learning process, although their roles will change when working with students pursuing educational options. Rather than being primary sources of content, teachers will guide students toward appropriate resources, cultivate the metacognitive and self-regulation skills needed in less structured environments (and for lifelong learning), monitor progress and assess mastery. Teachers also will share their expertise in pedagogy and psychology with community members working as mentors to maximize the value of students’ field-based experiences. Credit flex now allows credit even when students learn from a tutor, a grandparent, a university professor mentor, a practicing professional in the community, a subject expert, an online course facilitator, the Internet, books or hundreds of other possibilities. Students are free to learn from any source while working with the certified teacher at their school to determine how the student will show what he or she has learned.

Credit flexibility guarantees students access to online courses and postsecondary courses as alternatives to traditional high school courses. While districts may choose to approve specific providers to ensure that online educational options meet district standards for quality and rigor, students must be allowed online options for any course. Likewise, college and university coursework must be accepted, along with appropriate courses from postsecondary trade programs. This mandate applies to any college coursework, regardless of whether that coursework is paid for under Ohio’s Postsecondary Enrollment Options program, by the family or by any other source.

Credit flexibility must be available “on an on-going basis,” according to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). Schools cannot set a single deadline by which students must request credit flex. A guiding principle of the program is to increase student engagement: credit flex is designed to prevent students from checking out of school. Just as course registration follows a natural timeline in schools, so there will be peak periods for credit flex requests, especially those involving educational options to pursue new learning. However, if a student finds himself or herself shutting down in a traditional course, for example, because the pace is much slower than is his or her optimal learning pace, credit flex allows the student, along with an educator, to devise an alternate plan. Similarly, students ready to move into advanced courses should be provided the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of prerequisites.

This article concludes a yearlong series on the credit flexibility mandate going into effect in Ohio in fall 2010. See the fall 2009 issue of the Review for an overview of the program and the winter 2010 issue for an explanation of the plan’s two paths to high school credit.

A bold, new opportunity is on the horizon for Ohio students. Beginning this fall, all public, community and chartered nonpublic schools must allow students to earn high school credits “instead of or in combination with hours of classroom instruction,” according to SB 311. Called “credit flexibility,” this watershed change in Ohio secondary education offers students the opportunity to pursue high school learning in new ways, in new places and at different times. This handy, tear-out guide is designed to help families consider some of the many possibilities available under credit flexibility.

All schools chartered by the state must offer credit flexibility: Public, community and chartered nonpublic schools all fall under the mandate. While exempt from many state requirements like acceleration and gifted identification, private and parochial schools that grant an Ohio diploma must offer credit flex, much as they must administer the Ohio Graduation Test.

Credit flexibility is meant to be for everyone capable of doing the work. Schools cannot restrict credit flex to gifted students, to students with a certain GPA, to students with a particular attendance record or to students with a good behavior record. One major goal of credit flex is to reengage students who may have been turned off by the traditional educational system. If that system has not been the best fit for a child, that student may not have earned great grades. A student frustrated in school may not have behaved well in school. Credit flex allows educators and students the freedom to develop a learning plan around the student’s learning styles, interests, strengths and postsecondary goals.

Credit flexibility empowers students to select learning modalities that are effective for them. Some students thrive in online courses, even working late in the evening. Some students excel in a mentorship, working under the tutelage of a practicing professional. Some prefer independent study. Some students work at a pace faster or slower than that set in the classroom. Some students can learn straight from a book. While some students love the Advanced Placement course at their high school, others may prefer the college course with a college professor and college classmates using college facilities. Under credit flex, students have options beyond the 120-hours-of-seat-time-in-the-school-building-during-the-school-day arrangement; now a student can request an alternate modality that offers a better fit for him or her.
Credit flexibility is available for any and all high school credit. Districts may not limit the number of credits students earn through credit flex. The opportunity to demonstrate mastery, either of prior learning or at the culmination of an alternate option for new learning, must be available both for electives and for core graduation requirements. Furthermore, credit flex allows students to pursue high school credits in subjects not offered at their high school. For example, a student interested in a foreign language not offered at the high school may study with a tutor, with Rosetta Stone software, through an online course, through educational travel, or a combination of methods. While any motivated student always could pursue such learning in the past, Ohio schools now will recognize this mastery with appropriate course credit.

Credit flexibility provides for partial credits. Students don’t have to complete all the standards or learn all the content and skills for an entire course to earn credit. If, for example, a student participates in a summer music camp or takes a local evening art course, that work may count for a fractional credit.

Credit flexibility also provides for simultaneous credit. Students doing interdisciplinary work must be awarded credit in each subject for which their work demonstrates mastery. A student in the career-tech program taking a course involving design and drafting may be learning and using advanced math skills in the process. Credit flex now enables him or her to earn credit for the math work in addition to credits for the career-tech course. A student pursuing an independent study in government who writes up proposals and makes multimedia presentations to the city council may earn partial credits in English, speech and technology in addition to social studies credit.

Credit flexibility awards high school credit for the high school content and skills that a student already has mastered. Students ready for advanced coursework are not merely placed in higher courses but also awarded credit for their knowledge of prerequisite courses. Students can work with certified teacher guidance to develop a portfolio to show what they know. One student’s geometry portfolio may include a test that shows mastery of some of the standards, projects that show mastery of other standards and problem sets and proofs that show mastery of the remaining standards. Another student’s French portfolio may include a performance in the form of a conversation in French with the teacher, along with a written project to show mastery of certain standards, a test to show mastery of other standards and a PowerPoint to show mastery of culture standards. Under credit flex, students who come to school with high-school-level knowledge produce portfolios—again in modalities that showcase their own strengths—to earn partial, whole or even multiple credits. For their part, schools should offer guidance to students, such as study guides for tests and rubrics for various other portfolio components.

Credits earned through credit flex must be transcribed identically to those earned in the traditional classroom. This tenet was a key nonnegotiable point of the credit flex design team, which worked closely with many stakeholders, including the Ohio Board of Regents. These college and university representatives agreed that credits earned through credit flex are just as legitimate as traditional credits, so schools must use identical methods to record credit flex and traditional credits on transcripts.

On transcripts, the names of equivalent courses must be the same, including honors and other advanced level work, no matter how the credit is earned. In addition, grades should be assigned, unless the student selects a pass/fail grading option. However, for most courses and for most students planning to apply to college, grades will be necessary. And since the design team report specifically prohibits the listing of credit flex credits on the transcript “in any way that could disadvantage a student in their application to postsecondary or work opportunities beyond high school,” students doing advanced work through credit flex should have grades and/or class rank weighted consistently with any weighting the school does for traditional courses. In other words, a student who demonstrates mastery at the college level with a passing score on an Advanced Placement exam or who similarly demonstrates mastery of college-level work by completing a college course should have the grade weighted the same as students in a traditional Advanced Placement course have their grades weighted for doing college-level work.

Families have the right of appeal to the ODE if a student’s request for a learning option or mastery demonstration is denied. While the ODE will be appointing a special committee to review credit flex appeals, many school districts also will have an appeals process available to try to resolve concerns locally. If that proves impossible, though, families can appeal to the state level.

Ohio is on the cutting edge in granting credit to gifted learners and all students for the learning they pursue beyond the classroom and in allowing students to learn in the various ways that will allow them to excel. The possibilities of credit flexibility are limitless, demanding creative thinking by educators and families to capitalize on the program’s full potential.

The ODE’s Web site has two good documents, Credit Flexibility Plan/Report and Checklist for Local Board Policy Development, at http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?Page=3&TopicRelationID=14278&ContentID=61432. The OAGC Teachers’ Academy on March 23–24 will offer sessions both days on credit flexibility.

Anne Flick is a gifted intervention specialist holding a master’s degree in gifted education. She currently serves as parent liaison for Creative Connections Group (CCG), an educational consulting firm dedicated to working with gifted students. CCG provides workshops for schools and families on all topics related to the needs of gifted students. Anne also is a parent of two Ohio gifted students. Contact her at Flick@ccgohio.com.
# OAGC's 50th Annual Fall Conference

**The Hilton at Easton, Columbus, Ohio—October 17–19, 2010**

3900 Chagrin Drive, Columbus, OH 43219. 614-414-5000

## Mail-In Registration
Complete and mail this form with your payment or purchase order to:
3900 Chagrin Drive, Columbus, OH 43219. Make checks payable to the OAGC.

## Fax-In Registration
Complete and fax this form and purchase order copy to: Kay Tarbutton, OAGC Registrar
Fax: 614-337-9286.
Phone: 614-337-0386
E-mail: ktarbutton@bghglobal.net

## Memberships
You may join the OAGC at the time you register for the conference and receive member rates. Payment must be included.

## Cancellation
Cancellations must be received, in writing, by the registrar by October 8, 2010, and are subject to a $50 fee.

## CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please Check Items Below</th>
<th>Nonmember</th>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Nonmember</th>
<th>A No charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Sunday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Included with registration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please check if attending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Monday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental breakfast</td>
<td>$185</td>
<td>$165</td>
<td>$215</td>
<td>B $________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot lunch—Circle: vegetarian or regular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Tuesday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental breakfast</td>
<td>$185</td>
<td>$165</td>
<td>$215</td>
<td>C $________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot lunch—Circle: vegetarian or regular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Both Monday and Tuesday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental breakfast</td>
<td>$260</td>
<td>$240</td>
<td>$290</td>
<td>D $________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot lunch—Circle: vegetarian or regular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. OAGC Membership Rates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35 (Basic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60 (Basic + Gifted Child Today OR Creative Kids)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75 (Basic + Gifted Child Today AND Creative Kids)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Renewal (Current exp. date:_________)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. OAGC Membership Rates</td>
<td>Coordinator $15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In addition to basic membership</td>
<td>Teacher $10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent $5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher Education $10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check #</td>
<td>PO #</td>
<td>Membership check #</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>G $________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The OAGC may provide mailing labels to organizations or individuals with like interests. Check if you do NOT wish to have your address included. □
2010 OAGC ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE
LODGING INFORMATION

We are pleased to announce that the OAGC’s 58th Annual Fall Conference will be held at the Hilton Columbus-Easton.

In order to receive the special conference rate of $149.00, please call and make your reservation directly to the hotel by September 25, 2010.

Please call 614-414-5000 to secure your reservation with any major credit card. The group code for the OAGC discount is “TED.” 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: $149.00 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 Seltzer 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 SOUTH: CINCINNATI . . .
Take Interstate 71 North to Interstate 71 West (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 Seltzer 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 Seltzer Road.
Make a right on Chagrin Drive into the hotel parking lot.
(The hotel is on the corner of Chagrin Drive and Easton Way.)

FROM THE WEST: INDIANAPOLIS . . .
Take Interstate 70 East to Interstate 71 West (airport exit).
Remain on Interstate 71 West to Interstate 270 North.
Take the Easton exit (exit # 33) onto Easton Way.
Remain on Easton Way through one stoplight, crossing over Seltzer Road.
Make a right on Chagrin Drive into the hotel parking lot.
(The hotel is on the corner of Chagrin Drive and Easton Way.)

A DAY AT THE BEACH

Finally! The finishing touch to my castle. The sun seems to pour down its heat on my back.

Splash! I dive into the water and swim like a fish to sear. It feels soooo cool and refreshing. I glance over my shoulder and see a dolphin diving into the dark deep ocean. I wish I could grab hold of his fin and ride through the sea.

I’m shivering now so I dash out of the water. The sand sticks to my feet and by the time I’m back, my feet are blobs of sand. My mom says it’s time to leave, but we’ll come back in the evening.

The beach is a different place now that it’s evening. The waves splash gently against the rocks. The breeze softly wafts across my face. I watch as the sun slowly sinks into the ocean and suddenly it’s gone.

AUTUMN LEAVES

All the leaves are turning colors that are very bright.

Up in the trees, they are a beautiful sight.

PLAYING PIANO

Playing and practicing my favorite part
I just keep learning more and more
All my notes are gonna soar
Now my notes are gonna flow
Only in time for the show.

By Miranda Somers, 6th grade,
Berlin Elementary School,
East Holmes Local Schools

SKATEBOARD

Staying on is the key
Keeping balance troubles me
A driveway is where I skateboard the most
Try to go fast and then to coast
Every skateboard has four wheels
But when I fall off, my mama squeals
Ollie is a trick I like
And I can’t do it on my bike
Roads and highway I’m not allowed
Doing tricks makes me feel proud

by Charlie Schlabach, 6th grade
Berlin Elementary School
East Holmes Local Schools

The waves crash against the sand, sweeping away old seashells and bringing in new ones. I run across the seashore gathering seashells, anything I can find: sharp seashells, rough ones, even broken ones. The starving seagulls sweep over the sparkling bay seeking their dinner. I can feel the hot sun like an oven pounding against my back. The sand is red hot coals when I walk barefoot over them. I finally wade into the water. It soothes my hot feet.

By Brenda Miller, 6th grade,
Walnut Creek School,
East Holmes Local Schools

Turning and twisting, they land upon the ground. Many are falling but they don’t make a sound.

Now step outside and take a sniff. Look at the trees—they are a gift.

Everyone loves to jump into the leaves, and when you do, they get up your sleeves!

Very pretty autumn can be, enjoy the season and beautiful trees.

By Victoria Yoder, 6th grade, Walnut Creek Elementary School, East Holmes Local Schools
NOMINATION FORM FOR THE
SUSAN FAULKNER FINE ARTS
EXHIBITION AND AUCTION

Exemplary student work will be displayed on Sunday through Tuesday, October 17-19, 2010, at the OAGC Annual Fall Conference at the Hilton Easton Hotel in Columbus. 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. Minimum bid on all pieces of art will be $20.

Scholarships will be awarded to the top 15 students depending on the number and quality of entries received. 5th-8th grade entries = $200, 9th-12th grade entries = $300.

Students who wish to display and sell their artwork at the conference, and be considered for a scholarship, must submit this form and a digital photograph of the chosen artwork. It will then be critiqued for possible inclusion in the auction. Criteria for inclusion in the art auction are:

- Suitability for public display
- Advanced work for a student of this grade level with regard to Craftsmanship, Design and Composition, Technical Skills, Uniqueness, and Creativity.
- We hope to receive work from a variety of regions and ages of artists

This completed nomination form and a digital photograph that shows the quality of the student work must be received by June 30, 2010, in order to be considered. Please e-mail the photo as an attachment to the address below; you may send the form as an email 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 each be notified as to whether the student’s artwork has been chosen by September 30, 2010.

Please submit forms and photographs to Kay Tarbutton at the OAGC office by June 30, 2010. Her e-mail address is: KayTarbutton@sheglobal.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 No: ___________________________ 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 this subject matter or this medium; why you picked this piece from all of your artwork; are there any special meanings or imagery in your piece?
21ST CENTURY SKILLS
LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

By Pat Holcomb-Farrenkopf

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, a national organization, provides leadership for community entities (schools, businesses and so on) to adopt and initiate 21st-century skills to prepare youth for their future roles in a global society. The partnership has identified various aspects of 21st century skills. One of the qualities listed under the partnership’s criterion of leadership and responsibility is the ability to “to inspire others to reach their very best via example and selflessness.” An example of this, from before the onset of the 21st century, is highlighted below.

In the late eighties, I had the honor of serving as president of the OAGC. The 1989 OAGC Annual Fall Conference was held in Toledo, and a young lady by the name of Janice Taylor had been awarded one of our scholarships for advanced piano lessons. Her mother, Oh Kyung Taylor, asked to meet with me when we returned to central Ohio, and there the idea of the benefit concert for Children’s Hospital was created.

Janice and her mother wanted to give back to the community and suggested that they work with the central Ohio school districts, the Columbus Symphony, the business community, and the Ohio Theater to offer a concert for middle school students. Members of Pro-Musica worked with a cadre of gifted coordinators to prepare lessons and recordings of the music (at that time, the cutting-edge technology of audiotapes) so that district professionals could prepare their students for what they would be hearing. Each student attending would donate $2. They would enjoy a concert at the Ohio Theater and have raffle ticket chances to win such business-donated items as a baby grand piano.

The first concert took place in February 1990. Since then, the concert has been an annual event called “Playing from the Heart” and has become a concert dinner held at the Hyatt on Capital Square. Businesses purchase tables, and talented students from our schools are always featured during the program. This year, the concert dinner on June 7 marks the 21st year for the benefit; Invention Convention students who have created medical inventions will be featured during the reception, and a choir from Olentangy Schools under the direction of Dr. Joel Ellen Harris, GIS from Liberty Middle School, and Eric Gnesda, professor at Ohio Wesleyan and vocal artist from Columbus, will provide the musical contributions. I have been asked to give the keynote address, and I will, as always, talk about the vital importance of gifted education.

Our gifted coordinators of central Ohio have been asked to sponsor the 25th benefit concert, making it possible for our students to return to the Ohio Theater once again to celebrate the talents of our students for the selfless purpose of helping others.

There are opportunities all around us to foster similar behavior in our students, while making the compelling case for the importance of supporting gifted education efforts. A heightened sense of justice and caring for others are characteristics that we see in our students; this can be partnered with incredible talents in sharing with and for the good of our communities.

Pat Holcomb-Farrenkopf is the director of gifted services at Olentangy Local Schools.

Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

By Sally Roberts

The Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award was established by Maggie and Reg Green to honor their son, Nicholas, who was seven years old when he was killed in a drive-by shooting while on vacation in Italy with his family. Following Nicholas’ tragic death, the Greens’ generosity of spirit first emerged when they made the decision to donate his organs. The Greens felt that it was important to recognize the gifts, talents and excellent endeavors of children. Since 1998, the National Association for Gifted Children has worked with one affiliate from each state to select students in grades 3 through 6 for the Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award in order to recognize outstanding accomplishment in academics, the visual or performing arts, and/or leadership. The Ohio distinguished student will receive a $150 scholarship from the OAGC and a $500 savings bond from the NAGC and will be eligible for the National Distinguished Student Award.

The deadline for nominations is April 30. Application information and forms are available at www.oagc.com/?q=scholarship.
Piece One: Progress, by Anna Richard, Berea City Schools

Collage, Ink, Charcoal. “I created this piece to depict the way that our method of storing and working with data has changed during the past century, from ink and ledger paper to data encryption on the computer.”

Piece Two: Ten Minutes To Go, by Abby Richard, Berea City Schools

Collage, Marker, Pen. “I drew the original sketch for this piece at school during class. Some students worked while others took a moment to relax. I enjoy capturing the various moods, shapes and sizes of the people around me every day.”

By Jane Williams

Students in my gifted class, called Challenge, have been honing their technology skills by writing poetry. How is that possible? It was as simple as “record, drag and drop.” These 3rd- and 4th-graders learned these steps for making a podcast to share their work. Each wrote a poem called “If I Were in Charge of the World,” based on the poem of the same name by Judith Viorst (1981).

To increase their skills in creating multimedia projects, I adapted this lesson using Microsoft Word, GarageBand and iPhoto. With some suggestions from our technology teacher, students wrote their poems using Word, then revised and edited them with a partner. I decided that students would create a podcast in GarageBand. After recording their poems with background music, they added photographs created with iPhoto. Students brought in various props representing important objects in their poems. With their partners, they took pictures of each item using a digital camera, then downloaded the photos to our computer. Students selected the photos and simply “dragged and dropped” them into their recorded podcast.

Students shared their poems with the rest of the school during our video broadcast called “Primary Prime Time.” More important, they shared their creative talent and technology skills via our school district blog site. This was a fantastic way for students to spotlight their talent and hard work.


Jane Williams is currently the gifted intervention specialist at Independence Primary School in Independence. This is her 15th year of teaching kindergarten through 8th-grade students at I.P.S.
MORE SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENT TALENT: REGION 3

COLORS
Red strawberries small and bright
Yellow makes a lemon tart bite
Chartreuse t-shirts go up and down
Blue rides on the merry-go-round
Indigo means a storm is brewing
Green is new leaves, trees renewing
Tan is the scorching sand
Orange is a sun-burnt man
Maroon dresses swirl in the shade
Violet lupines in the mountain glade

WINTER
Snow falls, gently, making no sound, as the
trees softly sway through the swirling
performers, dancing gracefully in the air.
The sparrow flies through the dense flakes,
trying to fly home to its warm nest in the
hollow tree.
The animals rush home after the long day,
going to feed their children.
The wind blows gently, caressing the silver
shimmers falling from the sky.
An owl calls goodnight to the trees, hooting
his questioning goodbyes.
The moon is tucked up in the billowing
clouds, hibernating like the bear.
But unlike the bear, he will come out
tomorrow, to light up
the pure white path.

Crystals hang from the trees the next
morning.
The chickadee chirps out to the sparrow to
wake up and fly.
The ground is untouched and celestial,
as if angels came down and kissed the
Earth. The deer realizes the blessing and
steps out into the creamy piles of snow.
He lifts his head to the heavens and
praises God for the beauty upon them.
Thank you, thank you.
By Lauren Garner, grade 6, Strongsville City Schools

Of battles fought
and battles won,
that is what War dreams of.

Not of surrenders,
or of retreats
or of those who have suffered defeat.

For those who lose will slowly fade
when they hang their heads in shame,
as War forgets and trudges on.

Of battles to come,
and struggle and grief;
War dreams on and on.

I have nothing to write.
I’ve nothing to say.
I’ve drawn a blank,
although, I write.
Touche.

In the corners of my mind
I roam,
I still can’t think of a poem.

For a moment,
I had an idea.
What was it?
I can never be held
in any small cell.

For I am immortal.
I will never feel the flames at the gates of Hell.
I will never feel the wispy fluff of Heaven’s
cloud.
But I fly low and I fly high,
even though I cannot die.

I touch the water and pull back,
just a flicker on the surface, just a splash.

In the clouds the sparrows roam,
I roost with them and call it home.

For I am wind,
I am immortal.
By Connor Holden, grade 6, Strongsville City Schools

ARTICLES should be no more than 5,000 words in length. If the paper exceeds this length, the consent of the editors is required for publication. Articles should include the research aim and tasks, detailed methodology (quantitative, qualitative or a combination), literature overview on the research object, substantiation of the achieved results and findings, conclusion(s) and a list of references. Teacher- and school-based action research is welcome. Manuscripts should be arranged in the following order of presentation.

Cover page: Title (no more than 10 words), running head (working title), autobiographical note (the author’s full name, academic affiliation, telephone, fax and e-mail address and full international contact). Respective affiliations and addresses of coauthors should be clearly indicated. Please also include approximately 50 words of biographical information on each author.

Second page: A self-contained abstract, summary or resume of up to 150 words, describing the research objective and conclusions. Whenever appropriate, describing theory to practice or research to practice conclusions and implications is requested. Up to five keywords, which encapsulate the principal subjects covered by the article.

Subsequent pages: The main body of the text with headings, footnotes, a list of references, appendices, tables and illustrations.

Manuscripts are subjected to blind peer review. Authors are requested to prepare for blind review by submitting manuscripts with identifying information only on the cover page. The running head should appear on all subsequent pages. Accepted submissions must conform to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th edition.

Manuscript pages, including reference lists, should be double-spaced, using 1” margins. Use an easily readable serif font (such as Palatino, Courier or Times New Roman) in 12-point size. Figures should be camera ready (saved as JPG, TIFF or EPS files; Microsoft Application Files are acceptable for vector [line] art). Tables and figures should be used to present information which is also discussed in text.
Revisiting the Gifted in the 21st Century Task Force Report: Where Are We Now?

By Eric Calvert

In 2002, then State Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Tave Zelman convened a gifted education task force to conduct a comprehensive review of the state of gifted education in Ohio, identify improvement opportunities and barriers and make action recommendations to the State Board of Education.

Eight years later, current State Superintendent Deborah Delisle is preparing to convene a new gifted advisory council to address the implications of a new education funding model and develop gifted performance indicators for districts. Given the 21st century theme of this issue of the OAGC Review, this is an ideal time to revisit the Gifted in the 21st Century Task Force Report, recognize areas of progress, identify persistent challenges and reflect on lessons learned as the state embarks on a new era of reform.


Finding 1: Policy. Policies at both the state and local levels should promote educational opportunities for children who are gifted. Many local boards of education policies present barriers to best practices in the education of children who are gifted. Further, some state procedures and other policies may be detrimental to the provision of services for these children.

Most progress in this area has related to academic acceleration. Whereas in 2002 most districts had policies against acceleration, the adoption of an acceleration mandate in 2005 and the subsequent adoption of a state model acceleration policy in 2006 pushed schools and the state to reexamine policies on early admission to Kindergarten, grade promotion and retention, prerequisites and high school graduation. (Recent data, however, also show that although access to acceleration has improved, progress has not been universal. This suggests that a strong policy in support of acceleration is an essential, but not by itself sufficient, ingredient for progress.)

More recently, a provision in the Ohio Core Standards legislation has directed the ODE and the State Board of Education to develop a credit flexibility plan and required districts to provide options for students to earn credit based on demonstration of mastery (rather than seat time). Although credit flexibility is not specifically a gifted education policy, it has great potential to benefit gifted students. Although the state and many districts have been allowed to provide educational options provisions on the books for years—allowing students to earn credit through mentorships, internships, independent studies, educational travel and online programs—few students have been encouraged to take advantage of the flexibility allowed. State policies related to funding, assessment, accountability, educator qualifications and data reporting were still based on the assumption that all students would learn in the same way in the same place at the same time (and for the same amount of time), making it difficult even for schools that wanted to provide flexibility to do so. The credit flexibility mandate is now forcing a (sometimes stressful) reexamination of the entire web of policies and assumptions that govern how we “do” high school. Time will tell whether the credit flexibility initiative receives the attention and support it needs at both the state and local levels to be a transformational reform effort or whether it will remain merely a niche initiative benefiting a handful of students while leaving the factory model in place for the vast majority. The credit flexibility policy mandate takes effect in the fall of 2010.

Educators concerned about gifted students have also struggled to draw attention to the powerful influence of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) on state and local policies and priorities. Because the incentives and penalties embedded in NCLB focused so heavily on schools leading students to basic proficiency and provided few rewards for schools that helped students go above and beyond the minimum standards, curricula and programs emphasizing acceleration and talent development became a lower priority, a situation that contributed to stagnation in many districts and to a scaling back of gifted services in many others.

On a positive note, the ODE and the state board deserve credit for lobbying then Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings to allow states to replace school evaluation systems based on “absolute proficiency” with “growth models,” arguing that the absolute proficiency models fail to encourage schools to help those students far below—and those already far above—the proficiency threshold. State leaders should build on this going forward by enhancing and expanding tools that help educators use value-added data to make informed program choices and better differentiate curricula to meet the individual needs of students.

Finding 2: Accountability. Currently, schools are not held accountable for ensuring children who are gifted are served according to their needs. There is no system in place to ensure these children reach their full potential. Ohio’s report card system, while addressing district results in proficiency, does not specifically address children who are gifted. In addition, the Ohio the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has not yet addressed the gifted population in the state accountability system or in the guidelines and subsequent documents from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind). If Ohio is to enter the 21st century as a leader in gifted education, accountability for all children, including children who are gifted, will need to be an integral component of all policy and accountability decisions.

Unfortunately, to date, Ohio has made little progress in this area. The performance of gifted students as a subgroup is not a factor in the school rating system, and the availability of data on the performance of gifted students by school and district is very limited. It is possible, using the interactive local report card system, to see the number and percentage of students identified as gifted by racial and economic subgroup as well as the number and percentage of students who are deemed “proficient” on state assessments, but it is impossible to access data on the number or percentage of students receiving gifted services or on gifted student achievement beyond binary “proficient” or “not proficient” numbers. However, Superintendent Delisle and the State Board of Education have been given a golden opportunity to change this in the form of language in the school funding reform law requiring the creation of a “performance indicator” for gifted education. The gifted education task force now being convened will be charged with making recommendations on
this indicator and should strongly consider including as factors data related to the percentage of gifted students served, achievement measures of gifted students and local progress toward reducing racial and economic disproportionality among students identified as gifted and receiving gifted services as well as toward narrowing the upper achievement gap between the highest-performing deciles of white and minority students and economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students.

Finding 3: Services and Identification. Currently, districts are not required to offer any services to children who are identified as gifted. A recent survey indicated that during the 1998–99 school year, of the 236,804 children identified as gifted in Ohio, only 103,087, or 43.5 percent, were receiving any kind of service. Of those receiving services, only 41,245, or 40 percent, were receiving services through state funding. Without a system that supports acceleration, differentiation options and other appropriate services, the probability increases that children who are gifted will become alienated from school.

It is critical to accurately identify children's gifted areas to know what services to provide. Ohio Administrative Code § 3301-51-15 requires districts to identify gifted students in the areas of superior cognitive ability, specific academic ability, creative ability and visual and performing arts ability. Even though Ohio has mandated that districts identify children from kindergarten through grade 12, too little emphasis has been placed on the early identification of children who are gifted. In addition, many special populations go unnoticed in the identification process. Without attention to these underrepresented populations, appropriate services cannot be planned or provided.

Although some progress has been made in the area of identification (approximately 50,000 more students are now identified as gifted in Ohio now than were identified a decade ago), the news on service is mostly bad. In a recent presentation to the State Board of Education, Associate State Superintendent Jane Weichel reported that only about one in four students identified as gifted receives any form of service—a major step in the wrong direction. Furthermore, minority and economically disadvantaged students continue to face a double whammy. Not only are they less likely than white, Asian, and non-economically disadvantaged peers to be screened and identified as gifted, those who are fortunate enough to be identified as gifted are still less likely to receive gifted services than nonminority and nondisadvantaged peers. This is particularly troubling, as ODE data on OAT (Ohio Achievement Test) and OGT (Ohio Graduation Test) achievement clearly show that gifted students who do not receive services perform at lower levels than students who are served; a recent report by the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy featured in Education Week also shows that the achievement gap between Ohio's highest-performing black and white students has grown substantially over the last decade.

The inclusion of language related to early entrance to kindergarten in the state acceleration policy has focused some additional attention on young gifted students, and the ODE recently has made efforts to reach out to early childhood educators, day care providers and parents to raise awareness of the needs and characteristics of young gifted children. State law, however, does not recognize giftedness among students below grade K, and although educators and policy makers at all levels are recognizing the importance of enrichment for children from birth to the start of formal schooling, efforts to identify and cultivate talent have been limited. Some schools also remain hesitant to screen students in the early grades for gifted identification, arguing that early screening results in overidentification. Nonetheless, a handful of school districts (including Superintendent Delisle's former district, Cleveland Heights–University Heights) have found providing enrichment to young students and training to early grades teachers to be a promising strategy for reducing racial and economic disproportionality in gifted education. As the achievement gap widens each year students are in school, delaying serious identification efforts until students are in 3rd or 4th grade means missing the best opportunity to identify students from many underrepresented populations.

Guidelines and procedures for identifying students in the visual and performing arts have also been streamlined since 2000, and a coalition of gifted and arts educators has been working to identify and develop curriculum resources for creatively and artistically gifted students. There are some hopeful signs, however, that state leaders (including Governor Ted Strickland) are recognizing the value of cultivating creativity and artistic talent, both for students and for the economy. The loss of funding for the Summer Honors Institutes for gifted students was another setback for arts-related opportunities, as several top universities offered immersive programs in theater, dance, music performance and recording and multimedia production. This is another area in which the credit flexibility initiative will be helpful. Already, university-based and professional arts organizations such as the Wexner Center and BalletMet in the Columbus area are exploring ways to connect their outreach and education missions to credit flexibility opportunities.

Finding 4: Educators Who Serve Children Who Are Gifted. Current teacher preparation programs in Ohio do not require any coursework in differentiated instruction, assessment or appropriate service options for children who are gifted. According to Passow and Rudinski (1993), most states acknowledge the crucial role of teachers in the identification and education of the gifted and thus for providing staff development. Without adequate knowledge, attitudes and skills, teachers are unable to provide differentiated instruction to children who are gifted. From the results of the Ohio Survey on Gifted Education, Joyce Van Tassel-Baska (1997) found that staff development on the needs of gifted students was often infrequent or nonexistent for Ohio teachers.

At the policy level, this is another area in which the state has seen limited progress. The state updated standards for university programs preparing gifted education specialists to align with NAGC and CEC standards. Additionally, the federal Higher Education Act enacted last year included language requiring that training in the needs and characteristics of gifted students be included in preservice teacher preparation programs. However, there has been little apparent activity at the state's higher education institutions and little leadership on the part of the board of regents to ramp up gifted training outside of gifted intervention specialist endorsement programs.

The state has, however, witnessed a large-scale effort to develop capacity of in-service educators to address the needs of gifted students in the form of Project I-GET-GETEd, an ODE-led initiative that equips district- and ESC-based gifted specialists to facilitate training regular education teachers, school psychologists, counselors and administrators using materials developed
by national experts and delivered using a Web-based learning management system in a format aligned to federal standards for high-quality professional development. Over the last three years, thousands of educators in nearly every county of the state have participated. Sadly, the U.S. Department of Education’s Javits Gifted and Talented Education Program, which provided the funding that enabled the creation of this popular and cost-effective program, is at risk. The Obama administration (like the Bush administration before it) is recommending its elimination. In the past, funding has been restored by Congress over the objections of the White House; but because the budget deficit is near the top of Republican priorities and because several key gifted advocates on the Democratic side of the aisle are departing, the odds of the program’s survival this time seem long.

Finding 5: Funding. Ohio school districts vary widely in the options and services available to children identified as gifted. Those with more local resources are able to offer additional services, in contrast to districts that depend on state dollars alone. Even with local dollars, however, only 8 percent of districts reported that all of their identified gifted students were receiving services during the 1998–99 school year. Van Tassel-Baska (1997) reported: “State funding is pivotal to maintaining gifted programs in the state of Ohio.”

As previously discussed, funding for gifted services remained essentially flat for most of the first decade of the 2000s. However, significant increases for gifted education are promised in the school funding reform plan passed in July. If fully funded, the new evidence-based model will finally provide the fiscal resources needed to fully serve Ohio’s gifted population once the gifted intervention specialist and professional development components are fully phased in by the end of the 2010s—if districts broadly embrace cost-effective service options such as acceleration and cluster grouping of gifted students in content-based programs. To ensure that this occurs, the state should adopt a phased-in service mandate in which the percentage of gifted students served in each district is required to grow each year in line with the increases to the gifted teacher funding element. Initially, this would mean a minimum of 20 percent of gifted students receiving services. The statewide average of the percentage of gifted students served in each district is already over 25 percent; this goal is realistic today, would give districts ample time to thoughtfully plan and scale up service offerings in upcoming years and would result in slow but sure progress toward the ultimate goal of addressing the learning needs of every gifted student in Ohio’s public schools.

Finding 6: Leadership. The ODE currently funds two consultants for gifted education. To build capacity for the task force’s recommendations, it is critical for additional staff to be funded to serve Ohio’s school districts. Technical assistance, policy review and development, professional development and accountability are critical activities of state leadership.

ODE staffing levels for gifted education have risen and fallen with the economy, climbing from 2.0 FTE when the task force report was published, to a peak of 5.5 FTE. Currently, the state employs two full-time gifted consultants, two half-time intermittent consultants and a college intern. The state is undertaking a new educational funding model, revising academic content standards, developing performance-based assessments, addressing 21st Century Skills, reforming accountability processes, developing guidance for credit flexibility implementation and gearing up to manage Race to the Top initiatives (all of which have major implications for gifted students)—not to mention important gifted-specific initiatives like revising funding rules, developing gifted education performance indicators and sustaining Project I-GET-GTEd without federal dollars. It is clear that a return to higher staffing levels is needed if the state is to avoid missed opportunities and unintended consequences for gifted students in the new generation of policies and programs. (See 2002 task force report finding #1.)

Finding 7: Families and Community. VanTassel-Baska (1997) recommends stronger parent involvement in local programming in Ohio districts. Families and community are integral part of all children’s education. It is imperative that the ODE and local districts acknowledge the importance of families in the entire process of educating our children who are gifted.

Some important initial steps have been taken to promote greater involvement of families and communities in gifted education. For example, the last revision of the gifted education operating standards added language requiring districts to provide a copy of a gifted student’s WEP to his or her parents, and the state model acceleration policy requires districts to allow parents to participate in the acceleration evaluation and planning process. The ODE has also taken steps to reach out to parents of young children on gifted issues and assist them in translating frequently accessed documents into foreign languages commonly spoken in the state. Increased funding for gifted coordinators should also help build capacity at the local level for family engagement over time. Two parent organizations (in addition to the OAGC) currently have representation on the new gifted education task force.

Increasing community involvement is another area in which the credit flexibility initiative could be helpful for gifted students at the secondary level. The gifted operating standards explicitly allow gifted coordinators to facilitate mentorship and internship experiences for gifted students, and the credit flexibility policy allows students to earn credit for mentorships and internships aligned to academic goals. The stage, therefore, is set for leaders and experts in local businesses, governments, community groups and arts organizations to work directly with gifted students and extend their learning beyond the walls of the school.

A parent’s involvement in his or her child’s education is ultimately a matter more of personal responsibility more than of state or local policy, but policy can help responsible parents play a stronger and more effective role. This starts with providing access to more and better information about what and how gifted students are doing in school. Expanding screening efforts and communicating results would yield helpful information to parents on their children’s needs and abilities. A quality gifted education performance indicator would help parents of gifted students understand and support district improvement efforts. Finally, requiring and providing basic training on characteristics of gifted students and appropriate educational strategies for classroom teachers, whom parents rely on for guidance and who serve as the primary points of contact between families and schools, is perhaps the most important step that state and district leaders could take to help parents help their gifted children attain their goals and achieve to their full potential.
Parent Division Update

PARENTING—A BALANCING ACT

By Kathy Jackson

and to safeguard them from those who would hurt them. We provide for their spiritual development. We strive to be forecasters into the 21st century and to determine what our children need to learn now to be successful adults. We work to balance the needs of the individual, the needs of the family and the needs of the community. And as we work on this precarious balance, we want everyone in our children's lives to be working just as hard as we are on their development. Inevitably, something is always out of balance—sometimes with the parent, sometimes with the child, sometimes with the family and sometimes with the community.

Add to this balancing act the individual needs of a gifted child. The needs of the gifted are not more important than those of the nongifted. Sometimes they are the same. Sometimes the differences are small and nuanced. Sometimes the needs of a gifted child are so different that everyone agrees that the parent should be doing something different—if only we knew what.

What is a parent to do? One answer is finding a support group that shares the parenting journey. The OAGC Parent Division can be that support. We work to be a resource of information about gifted education for better decision making. We work to be a nurturing community of parents of gifted children, struggling together with the balancing act and reminding each other that no one knows it all or has it all together and that there is no one best way to parent. We work to increase the number of educators in our children's lives who understand and support the needs of the gifted. We hope more parents will join us.

Those of us who attended the Parent Division meeting at Blue Ash Elementary on February 27 were able to share our successes, our struggles and our visions for the future. SycamoreGEAR and ForestHillsPOGS hosted an energetic meeting with an agenda that included social networking, planning for Parent Day, advocacy updates, parent group development and credit flexibility. For information on the OAGC Parent Division, see the OAGC Web site or contact me, Kathy Jackson, Parent Division chair, at kathy.jackson@kettering.org or 614-246-0377. More specific requests for help with Parent Day 2010 and other activities will be coming soon.

Kathy Jackson is the chair of the OAGC Parent Division.

Reflections on Parenting Moderately Gifted and Highly Gifted Children

By Jeri Millhouse

As the mother of two sons, one of whom is moderately gifted and one of whom is highly gifted, I can speak from personal experience about the salient differences between students with high IQs and students with very high IQs. My sons have dealt with several of the same issues, but to varying—and, in fact, quite divergent—degrees.

From birth, my eldest, who is highly gifted, has exhibited hyperactivity. Even as a newborn, he rarely slept 8 hours out of 24. As an adult, he continues to require little sleep. Although my younger son has irregular sleep patterns, he will eventually catch up by sleeping a long stretch. My eldest does not seem to have this need to catch up.

In my eldest, over excitabilities are much more pronounced than in my youngest. My eldest has always needed to be on the move. His resting heartbeat approaches 100 beats per minute. He has a heightened sensual awareness of fabrics and food textures. He has always demonstrated an avidity for knowledge and the search for truth. There is nothing he enjoys more than being intellectually challenged and having intellectual arguments, particularly with those who can hold their own with him. Throughout his life, he has always had some invention in the works.

In contrast, my youngest son is much calmer. He is a trivia buff, like his brother, particularly in areas of strong interest to him. He likes a good intellectual debate but tires of it much more quickly than his brother does. His inventions tend to be more creative and practical, and less visionary and experimental.

My eldest has always been out of sync with his peers to a greater degree than his brother has been. Once he reached high school, he sought out friends three to four years his senior in order to satisfy his need for intellectually stimulating conversation. My youngest is quite socially adept, tending to hang out with the artsy crowd. My youngest found the Summer Honors Institute very enjoyable and stimulating, but my eldest found it life-changing. He experienced great joy and relief at finding other teens like himself.

A counselor once told me that raising my eldest required about the same amount of energy as raising six "normal" children. Parenting a very high IQ child is a joyous experience, albeit one often replete with pain. Until the child matures and attains social skills adequate to cope in the culture, parents endure the frequent and sometimes debilitating pain of watching their child experience rejection, loneliness, isolation, depression and victimization. I have truly come to understand that "to whom much is given, much is required" (Luke 12:48).

Jeri Millhouse is the mother of two gifted children and works as a gifted intervention specialist for Ashland City Schools.
EDUCATION AND EXCELLENCE IN OUR HIGH SCHOOLS

PROMOTING BOTH THROUGH 21ST CENTURY SKILLS AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAMMING

By Karen Rumley

What is the purpose of formal education? If we all could agree on the answer to that question, then making policy, designing curricula and delivering instruction would be much simpler. Education initiatives tend to promote a particular philosophy about the purpose of education: to raise good and knowledgeable citizens, to ensure a well-rounded classical education, to develop skills that are necessary in the workplace, to provide academic rigor in critical fields, to offer students a venue explore their own interests, to teach social interaction skills for cooperation and effective communication with others and so on. Every 10 to 20 years or so a new philosophy of “purpose” comes to prominence and drives policy makers to reevaluate how education is handled in their arenas: funding, curriculum development, professional development, assessment, employment and so on. Our concern as gifted education practitioners and child advocates is to ensure that the current program inspired by the latest trend is developed and implemented in a way that provides as much challenge and opportunity for growth as possible for our advanced learners.

The Ohio Department of Education has recently entered the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, a multistate initiative to refocus educational priorities to ensure that students graduate from our schools with the knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary to be successful and competitive in the ever-changing world and job market of the 21st century. Certainly, Ohio’s gifted specialists, coordinators, parents and other advocates will be paying close attention to maintaining academic rigor and opportunities for advanced learners, as they have with other standards-based initiatives. To what extent, then, should 21st Century Skills initiatives promote preparation for higher education as a potential avenue to success in life?

High school typically has been the launching pad for students to enter the job market, the military or higher education; thus, schools have offered diverse programs to enable such options. In addition to dual enrollment, independent study and other programs specifically designed to encourage and allow extension and enrichment for our gifted secondary students, Advanced Placement (AP) coursework has emerged as a primary avenue for preparing students for entrance to and success in college, as well as providing challenging coursework. With its emphasis on academic content and college readiness, one might raise a concern that the AP focus is too narrow to align with the breadth of the 21st Century Skills initiatives. On the contrary, AP is an ideal extension of most of the skills, offering challenge and opportunity for our gifted students, those who are often overlooked by those who advocate change on behalf of “all” students. The following is not meant to be an exposition of 21st Century Skills or an estimation of the value of the initiative, but rather a discussion of the alignment between the Partnership program and existing external curricula, notably Advanced Placement, that are often the primary gifted service for high school students. For more discussion of the intricacies of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, the 21st Century Skills Framework or Advanced Placement courses, several sources are referenced below.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND THE COLLEGE BOARD

The more than 30 Advanced Placement courses offered by the College Board provide “willing and academically prepared high school students with the opportunity to study and learn at the college level” (2010). The course curricula are developed by field specialists and university faculty to ensure that the required skills and content reflect those needed in college by aligning the courses with college-level standards. The College Board also must approve classroom teachers’ course syllabi before awarding the designation “AP” for student transcripts. The exam given at the end of each course is scored on a 5-point scale; students earning a 3 or higher may earn college credit or advanced course placement at the college or university level, although criteria for such awards vary by institution. Additionally, students gain exposure to a college-level exam, and such efforts reflect positively on transcripts and college and scholarship applications (College Board n.d. “AP Central”).

21ST CENTURY SKILLS AND AP: PURPOSES AND ASSUMPTIONS

The overarching purpose of this reorganization of standards, curricula and assessments is to ensure students have the core academic knowledge and skills that are essential for success in employment and life. The primary assumption is that “[e]ducation . . . is the attempt to convey from one generation to the next the skills, values, and knowledge that are needed for successful life” (Partnership n.d, b, 1). The College Board takes this one step further, asserting that higher education is crucial to job success, noting that “in today’s information-based economy, a college education is a necessity, not a luxury” (n.d. “AP Program”). College entrance is obviously a priority for American students: more than 68 percent of high school graduates begin college each year. But the need for academic remediation is astonishing: more than half of all first-year college students must take at least one remedial course (College Board 2010).

The College Board, which organizes and promotes college readiness programs and entrance exams, including AP, as well as the PSAT, CLEP and SAT tests and SAT-Subject tests, argues that purposeful and appropriate student preparation for college-level coursework while still in high school will greatly enhance the likelihood of college graduation. The National Center for Educational Accountability suggests that a score of 3 or higher on an AP exam “is a strong predictor of a student’s ability to persist in college and earn a bachelor’s degree.” In fact, even students who earn 1s and 2s in certain fields, like math and science, still demonstrated stronger content mastery than their college peers with no AP experience (College Board 2010).

The Partnership asserts, “To provide an excellent and equitable education for every child, schools must more effectively incorporate advances in learning science into instructional practice” (n.d.b, 6), and the Advanced Placement philosophy and programming aligns directly with this admonition. The College Board has placed a high priority on closing the “equity and excel-
lence" gap and to ensuring access through initiatives to increase participation and performance of typically underrepresented minority and low-income populations. Its annual AP Report to the Nation (2010) specifically addresses such concerns, providing states and school districts with guidance and resources for reaching student groups that are not typically drawn to or recruited for such opportunities. This priority correlates with concerns within the gifted community: how to promote state and district policies that ensure that minority and low-income students are not overlooked in identification or service because of narrowly focused assessments and hidden assumptions about the typical gifted student (Gallagher n.d.).

The AP program increases students’ opportunities for success in entering, paying for and completing college. Advanced Placement can be of significant financial assistance to students who earn college credit by scoring well on the exam (College Board n.d. “AP and the Cost of College”). A student who earns college credit from several AP exams may be able to begin college at sophomore status, having paid no tuition for the freshman year. AP enables students who might otherwise not have the opportunity to access higher education. There is, however, a downside to increasing accessibility: the greater the number of students who participate, the greater the number of students who fail the exam (that is, achieve a score less than a 3). Universities and the College Board, however, promote the AP course experience as itself valuable for improving college success, even for those who earn a low exam score (Lewin 2010). Although there are many perceived advantages to participating in the Advanced Placement program, there are many criticisms, including the potential for diminishing rigor in the name of access and an inflated emphasis on test success over academic growth and exploration. These criticisms should be weighed carefully by those investigating AP options (Editors 2009).

The AP program also incorporates learning science into instructional practice. Every opportunity is made to provide professional development for AP instructors, as various training seminars are available online, in daylong workshops and in intensive weeklong programs. Every course has its own electronic discussion group through which AP teachers from around the world discuss best practices with each other and with content specialists, professors, course and test designers and other interested parties (College Board n.d. "AP Central").

The Partnership (2009a) stresses the incorporation of technology literacy and use, rigorous content and real-world relevance as well as the interconnection and interdependence of the content, themes and skills. The AP program diverges somewhat from the Partnership’s expectations in that AP courses are developed, promoted and taught in isolation from other courses. Although the College Board offers extensive electronic resources in support professional development and best practices, and providing support systems for instructors, the level of technology incorporation into classroom practice will vary widely according to the course curricula and the efforts of the classroom instructors. Thus, it is difficult to ensure that the 21st Century information, media and technology skills are consistently emphasized in the AP classroom. The Partnership’s concern for rigor and relevance is driven in AP by the contributors to course development, committee members who currently teach at America’s top colleges and universities and who define the importance of their courses and fields at the collegiate level (College Board n.d. “AP Central”).

21ST CENTURY SKILLS AND AP: THE CONTENT AND SKILLS

Just as the Partnership requires the development of new standards for learning and assessment, the College Board has been developing and releasing comprehensive standards for the major disciplines. The purposes of each set of standards mirror the purposes of the 21st Century Skills initiatives, notably preparation for the needs of the discipline’s career fields, with additional emphasis on discipline-specific college-readiness skills. Such standards have been developed in science, English language arts and math and statistics (College Board n.d. “Standards”). Each course has its own set of specific standards, culminating in a standard course assessment, much like the plans for end-of-course exams in 21st Century Skills course curricula.

The Partnership (2009a) stresses learning outcomes in several core subjects: English, reading and language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history and government and civics. Participating states, like Ohio, will once again reorganize and redefine their standards, curricula and assessments. Likewise, course standards and outcomes are clarified in each of the more than 30 AP courses in these fields. Thus, the core subjects of the programs align with each other, and the rigor of any AP course should, understandably, extend the standard core curriculum.

A common criticism of the AP program is that the magnitude of the course expectations preclude the ability of instructors to incorporate multifaceted long-term projects or topics of student interest that diverge from the course curricula. Additionally, the interdisciplinary themes promoted in the 21st Century Skills program (global awareness; financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy; and environmental literacy) are more likely to be addressed in specific AP courses than across them. Instructors often report the frustrations they experience in attempting to teach the extensive volume of information required in an AP course at the expense of providing any purposeful meaning for the content or cultivating any passion for the discipline (Abeles n.d.). In support of AP rigor, research suggests that the most important precollege predictor of bachelor degree completion is the academic intensity of a student’s high school curriculum (Adelman 2006).

The category of “life and career skills” includes areas that are consistently reported as the most important for employment: flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability and leadership and responsibility. These are the skills that AP students develop as they learn to adapt to the increased expectations of college-level work. One would assume this would translate to using such skills in the workplace, as advocated by the Partnership.

The 21st Century Skills for learning and innovation certainly correlate with the learning and communication expectations of the AP courses. The promotion of critical thinking and problem solving skills is highlighted in the 21st Century Skills as well as throughout the AP courses, as their curricula describe discipline-specific “habits of mind.” The social sciences, for example, place heavy emphasis on document analysis, detecting bias and solving problems by using a variety of resources. Of key importance to today’s employers are communication and collaboration skills,
21st Century Skills . . .  
For Adults, Too!  
PLANNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVELY  
By Julie Nolan, Cindy Teske and Pat Holcomb-Farrenkopf

Olentangy Local Schools is a growing K–12 public school district of 15,000+ students in 13 elementary, 4 middle and 3 high schools. In approaching the goal of providing professional development for district administrators, teachers, counselors, psychologists and parents regarding identification and support for our gifted population, district leadership selected the Javits I-GET-GTEd online modules as a tool. The director of gifted services and the 16 elementary and middle school gifted intervention specialists were sent to the Ohio Department of Education’s Javits Facilitator Training during the first quarter of the 2008–9 school year. From this seminar a plan was developed to train professionals in our district and to provide workshops for parents. The plan also included using the gifted intervention specialists as facilitators over a five-year period to achieve that goal. Ideas from all groups were collected regarding how to provide the time for this professional development. As we all know, time and money are often two main areas of concern.

During the second half of the 2008–9 school year, all Olentangy elementary administrators participated in Javits training. At the same time, the majority of the gifted intervention specialists were either offering this training in their buildings or planning for summer opportunities and continued professional development for the 2009–10 school year.

At Scioto Ridge Elementary, the building leadership chose to begin schoolwide Javits training by identifying one teacher in each of grades 3, 4 and 5 to join them and the gifted specialist in a release-day workshop. The director of gifted services led this one-day in-person training and provided the teachers with information to go online for additional materials to support differentiation. Each teacher submitted a final report outlining a differentiated lesson designed for their classroom and received college credit for the workshop.

During the 2009–10 school year, Scioto Ridge leaders and the director of gifted services planned a similar workshop for the remainder of the K–5 teachers. They made this decision because the Javits training was evaluated as directly and positively supporting other instructional initiatives made for their students. At Scioto Ridge, 70 percent of the population in grades 3 through 5 are projected to be at the accelerated or advanced levels on the Ohio Achievement Assessment. Raising awareness in serving students who are identified as gifted in all academic areas rather than just one area allows for appropriate differentiation to meet the needs of all high achieving students.

These Javits classes focused on

- Social and emotional needs of gifted learners, including
  - Twice-exceptionality
  - Perfectionism
  - Career goals
  - Underachievement
  - Gifted girls
- Differentiation—eight strategies including
  - Compacting
  - Independent study
  - Tiered assignments

The building administrators offered the following incentive in addition to college credit: If teachers agreed to arrive at school half an hour early on one day each month for the Javits training, they could then come in half an hour later during that same month.

The final class meeting was a follow-up discussion about differentiation using a self-assessment process of classroom practices. The director of gifted services scheduled a day when teachers could meet with her individually or in grade-level groups. These discussions focused on the areas of the self-assessment in which the teachers felt most confident. They were also encouraged to discuss their individually determined areas so that clarification or guidance could be provided.

The benefits of collaborative work among building-level and central office administrators include

- the synergy of working together toward a common goal
- administrators taking their own Javits professional development first, then actively participating when their staff received the teacher module
- providing benefits for all students though the Javits differentiation module
- establishing relationships so that teachers are comfortable asking for assistance in working with the gifted intervention specialist and director of gifted services
- providing a professional development model for other schools in the district to replicate

As we focus on the 21st Century Skills needed to assure that all of our students are prepared for the global society, collaboration at both the child and adult levels is crucial. It is true that students learn much more from what we do—by the behaviors we model—than just from what we say.

Julie Nolan is the principal of Scioto Ridge Elementary in Olentangy Local Schools. Cindy Teske is the assistant principal of Scioto Ridge Elementary in Olentangy Local Schools. Pat Holcomb-Farrenkopf is the director of gifted services in Olentangy Local Schools.
In case you haven’t noticed, we have moved into the 21st century (didn’t that happen a decade ago?)—“we” being academics and educators as well as politicians all over the country who just now seem to have woken up to this. The result is a flood of books, articles and speeches on 21st-century skills. In case somehow you’ve been busy doing real work and haven’t seen too much of this movement, check out the Web site of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (www.21stcenturyskills.org). Here you will find an overview of what this phrase refers to. A great deal of free information and many presentations are available as Webinar downloads. It is important that we in gifted education remain current on this issue, as ramifications are many, both for us and for our field.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) recently published Curriculum 21: Essential Education for a Changing World, edited by Heidi Hayes Jacobs (whom you may remember from her work on curriculum mapping and integrative and interdisciplinary curricula. The book makes some interesting points and raises some good questions. Jacobs is certainly right that schools still look more like the 1950s than any successful business, office or even retail store. In part, this is because schools depend on the public to allocate resources. In part, it’s because of the disconnect between colleges of education and public schools. In part, it’s because parents and community members expect schools to function and look like the schools that they attended. (So we put aside positive practices like continuous progress, alternative grading using authentic assessment, multiage grouping and so on.) The field of education doesn’t often enough apply its own best practices research.

Much of Jacobs’s book is devoted to using technology to enhance teaching and learning. It also addresses “globalizing the curriculum.” The book is worth skimming, and maybe even reading certain chapters. Let me draw you back, however, to another work, one that provides much of the curricular foundation for our field: Virgil Ward’s A Differential Curriculum for the Gifted (1980). Ward directly addresses the responsibility of educating gifted students for leadership and social responsibility while extending core content knowledge and what we now call critical thinking. The Parallel Curriculum Model (Tomlinson, Kaplan, Renzulli et. al.) incorporates many of the 21st Century Skills, including the Identity Parallel, which addresses many of the “habits of mind” that Costa and Kallick describe in their chapter. The ASCD book is full of the “content, process, product” changes that all beginning gifted intervention specialists have drilled into them as the basis of differentiating instruction for gifted and advanced learners. Three of the essential 21st Century Skills for learning and innovation are creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration. Decades earlier, Ward described these communication and collaboration skills as the most basic components of good curricula for the gifted—it’s why so many gifted programs are based in reading and language arts classes.

So here’s where we, as gifted educators, can take the lead. Many of these critical elements now being called “21st Century Skills” have been part of gifted education for a long time. We can be valuable contributors to the conversations in our schools and districts and valuable partners to teachers and administrators working to implement practices that we have been using for years. We could be and should be leading the way in discussions about 21st Century Skills in our districts, communities and colleges and preparing our students for the 21st century. We’ve been trying to implement this type of education and curriculum for decades but have been dismissed as “elitist” or “incidental” to standards-based, test-oriented instruction. Our teachers and students already know how to teach and learn in these “new” ways. We must continue to assert ourselves, fight for our programs that model these skills and recognize that gifted children will lead the way in the 21st century, as they have in every century past, if only we provide them with the free and appropriate public education they have been promised.

I encourage all of us to become familiar with these materials so that we can actively participate in the discussions and share our knowledge. We know how to teach critical thinking and problem solving, how to develop rigorous content and assessments, how to nurture creativity, how to cultivate global awareness and how to teach the communication skills (interpersonal and technological) that essential to sharing what students have learned. 21st Century Skills are the same skills (plus cyberspace and technology) that have moved the world forward since... well, since the beginning of time. Educators got distracted by multiple-choice scantron tests, a myth of accountability and a mistaken definition of democracy as “the same.” We have a great opportunity here to lobby for our field and for our students, and we should seize it now.


Susan Rakow is the chair of the OAGC Higher Education Division.
Once you’ve read this issue, why not pass it along?

- Principal
- Science Department
- Special Education
- Gifted Education
- Counseling Department
- Language Arts Department
- Parent-Teacher Association
- Math Department
- Social Studies Department
- Library/Media Center

And the Surveys Say ...

PUBLICATIONS SURVEY
The members of the OAGC Publications Committee are looking for ways to meet the needs of the OAGC membership. To that end, they have developed a short survey that can be accessed at www.surveymonkey.com/s/P13K9C7. There will also be a link posted on the OAGC Web site.

STATE OF GIFTED EDUCATION
As Ohio policy makers begin to look at changes to the Ohio Evidence-Based Model formula and the new gifted advisory council starts its work to develop new operating standards, the OAGC is seeking information about the current state of gifted identification and service in your district.

A new survey is available at www.surveymonkey.com/s/Y3Y19MS. There will also be a link posted on the OAGC Web site.