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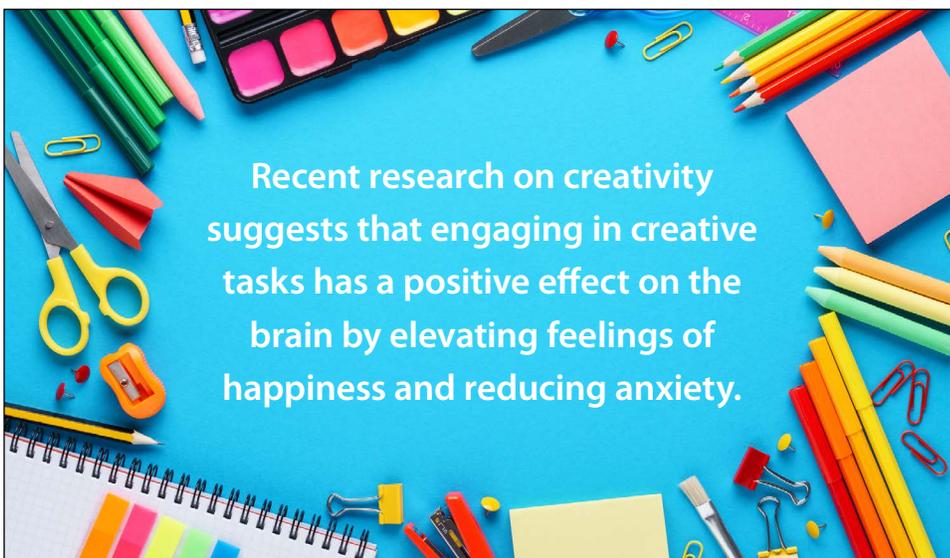
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Can Creativity Improve Engagement and Emotional Well-Being?

By Lisa Bloom, EdD, WCU
Kristy Doss, PhD, WCU



Given the social and emotional issues often experienced by gifted learners such as anxiety and perfectionism, pedagogies and strategies that promote learning as well as a sense of well-being are essential. Recent research on creativity suggests that engaging in creative tasks has a positive effect on the brain by elevating feelings of happiness and reducing anxiety.

In a small pilot study, participants in Western Carolina University's Rocket to Creativity (RTC), a summer enrichment program for teachers and children aged 7-15, we explore the connection

between creativity and happiness. During Rocket to Creativity, instructors provide experiences grounded in Problem-Based Learning (PBL), student-driven inquiry, and creative problem-solving. Instructors receive training on these methods through coursework prior to the week-long program with children. Instructors collaborate to lead various theme-based groups in topics such as physics & engineering, nature, science, performance, arts, or social justice. Children receive daily creative challenges or complete a PBL project to investigate the theme, and the week culminates

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Message from the President

The North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented (NCAAGT) is an organization of teachers, parents, other educators, and community leaders who foster a better understanding of the needs and capabilities of academically/intellectually gifted children. For membership information visit www.ncagt.org or contact Margaret Crawford at (336) 312-9324.

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Submissions

We invite contributions. News items, articles, and notices of events pertinent to educating gifted children and youth are welcome. Send submissions to Jo Landreth at jlandreth@ncagt.org.

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“One for the books”

It’s never occurred to me to use this expression before. I guess nothing has seemed memorable or accomplished enough to want to mark it in the record books. Until now. Our first-ever fully virtual NCAAGT conference is worth remembering, at least in my totally biased, very humble opinion. The past year seems quite the blur of seemingly insurmountable unknowns, technological puzzles, series of trials and errors, vague Hail-Mary Google searches, discoveries and deceptions and a whole lot of positive thinking and teamwork.

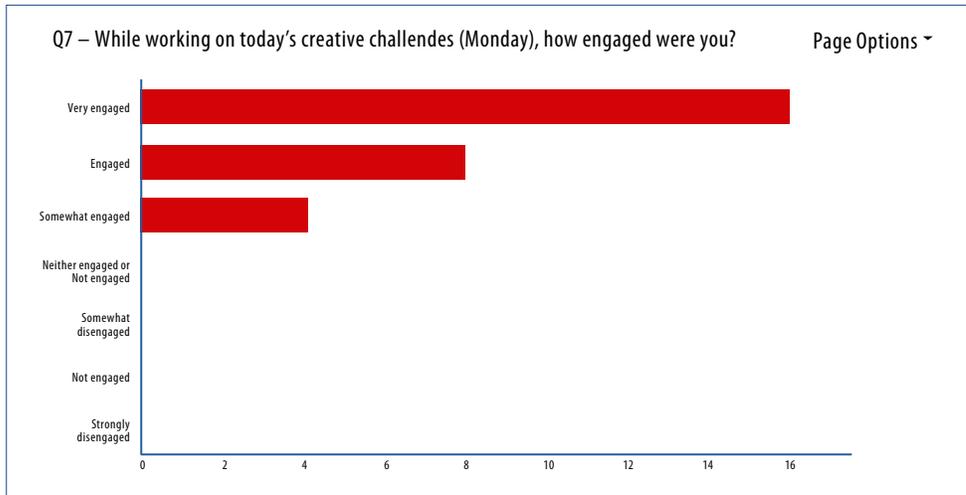
We hope that attendees of our 46th annual NCAAGT (virtual) Conference experienced even a fraction of the learning and growth that our Board did. We are so grateful for the number and quality of the presentations that were submitted, for the support of donors

and sponsors, for our technical assistance partners who answered question after question, and for this group of dedicated, passionate, perfection-seeking educators who tackled the challenge with grace, patience and stamina. “Volunteer” took on a whole new meaning this year.

Even though hosts, presenters and attendees were scattered across the state, attending from their individual school buildings, office cubicles or living rooms, there was still a strong sense of togetherness. The NCAAGT conference is always a time for rejuvenation and renewal – and this year did not disappoint. While we missed the lobby conversations, we made up for it in the chat. Sessions were still “standing room only” – filled with curious, note-taking attendees. Presenters took us up on the challenge of preparing a variety of session types, and we even came together around a virtual table during Lunch and Learns. Our Keynotes still had virtual standing ovations and their nuggets of truth were repeated and “liked” in instantaneous solidarity.

**“One for the books” for sure.
What’s next? Bring it on!**

Dibrelle Tourret



in a celebration where the children share their work with parents and the community.

In this study, youth participants were asked to rate their sense of happiness and their perceived level of engagement during both tasks that involved opportunity for creativity and tasks that did not. Additionally, they were asked to think back on school days that included opportunities for creativity and school days that did not. They were asked to rate those days regarding perceived levels of happiness.

Our results showed a connection between both creativity and happiness and creativity and engagement during RTC and greater perceived happiness when looking back on opportunities for creativity during school.

In the graph above, you can see that the children responded that they were very engaged, engaged, or somewhat engaged in the creativity challenges. Students responded in the same manner over the course of the week. Some of the creativity challenges included creating a Rube Goldberg machine, using SCAMPER to modify a current product and create something new, designing a creature to accompany a song, building a musical instrument using recycled materials, making a parachute for a toy using

common materials found in the house, and creating a superhero for your social justice campaign.

All challenges and student products can be viewed on this website: <https://rockettocreativity.wcu.edu/>

The graph below shows responses to how children perceive their happiness level when using creativity in schools. For a majority of individuals, the experience of being creative affected their level of happiness.

This study does have limitations. For example, our original plan was to have students rate their level of happiness while in school instead of reflecting on

the experiences. COVID caused a change of plans. Even so, the data suggest that the opportunity for creativity can enhance well-being and engagement in school activities.

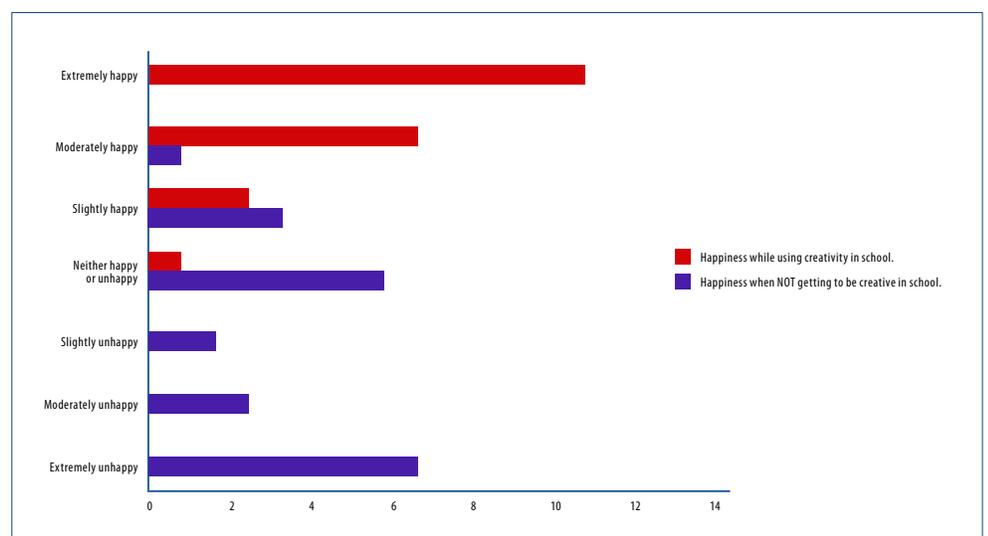
We suggest teachers replicate the study in their own classrooms. A simple rating instrument on a Google form can help students and their teachers monitor happiness and engagement during school activities. By the nature of school and curriculum, teachers and students will always have times they need to engage in less-preferred activities. Interspersing these experiences with creative opportunities may help keep school a place that students want to be and where their well-being can flourish.

Here are some quick ways to incorporate creativity in classrooms for gifted children.

Pop-up challenges

Pop-up challenges are quick, fun problems presented to learners when the class appears to need a mood boost. Examples include:

- Have learners use flipgrid or another tech tool to create 90-second videos recommending books that other students might find enticing to read.



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Learning to Exhale: Meeting the Social Emotional Needs of Gifted Children

By DR. ANGE KERN



Dr. Jim Delisle

Dr. Jim Delisle shared his keynote address at the 26th Annual NCAGT Conference titled, “Learning to Exhale: Meeting the Social Emotional Needs of Gifted Children.”

Dr. James (Jim) Delisle has taught gifted children and those who work on their behalf for more than 40 years. Jim retired from Kent State University in 2008 after 25 years of service as a Distinguished Professor of special education. Throughout his career, Jim has taken time away from college teaching to return to his “classroom roots,” volunteering as a 2nd, 4th, 5th and 8th grade teacher in 1991, 1997, and 2006. Jim also taught gifted middle school students one day a week between 1998-2008 in the Twinsburg, Ohio Public Schools. For the past ten years, Jim has worked part-time with highly-gifted 9th and 10th graders at the Scholars’ Academy in Conway, South Carolina.

The author of more than 275 articles and 25 books, Jim’s work has been translated into multiple languages and

has been featured in both professional journals and in popular media, such as *The New York Times*, *People Magazine*, and on Oprah! Two of Jim’s award-winning books, *Doing Poorly on Purpose: Strategies to Reverse Underachievement and Respect Student Dignity*, and *Understanding Gifted Children from the Inside-out: A Guide to the Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Kids* were both published in 2018. *Creating Strong Kids Through Writing* and *Creating Kind and Compassionate Kids* are his latest books, published in 2020. A frequent presenter throughout the U.S., Jim has also addressed audiences in nations as diverse as England, Greece, China, Oman, the Netherlands, Ecuador, Turkey, Malaysia, Thailand, New Zealand, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Highlights of Dr. Delisle’s message to attendees included the notion of lifelong learning – sometimes as the teacher and sometimes as the learner. There is much to learn when observing the work and minds of gifted students.

In his research, Dr. Delisle has explored what gifted children have found to be troublesome. He shared eight great gripes that gifted children have, which teachers should consider:

1. “No one explains what being “smart” or gifted is all about. It’s kept a big mystery.”
2. “School is too easy and/or not relevant.”
3. “Parents, teachers and/or friends expect me to be perfect.”
4. “Friends who really understand me are few and far between.”

“Giftedness is who you are, not what you do! Giftedness is more than simply being smart. Everyone has something unique about them. Every student has their own uniqueness, find it!”

– Dr. Jim Delisle

5. “I get teased about being smart.”
6. “I feel overwhelmed by the number of things I can do in my life.”
7. “I feel different and alienated from most of my classmates – I think in different ways than they do.”
8. “I worry about world problems and feel helpless to do anything about them.”

Annemarie Roeper stated, “Giftedness is a greater awareness, a greater sensitivity, and a greater ability to understand and transform perceptions into intellectual and emotional experiences.” As Delisle said it best, “Giftedness is who you are, not what you do! Giftedness is more than simply being smart. Everyone has something unique about them. Every student has their own uniqueness, find it!”

The Equity Case for Prioritizing Gifted Education at a Moment of Reckoning

By DR. ANGE KERN



Colin Seale

Critical Thinking to All Students (Prufrock Press, 2020), when he's not serving as the world's most fervent critical thinking advocate, Colin proudly serves as the world's greatest entertainer to his two young children.

During his keynote, Colin emphasized that while brilliance is distributed equally, opportunity is not. "Education can't just be about closing achievement gaps but shattering achievement ceilings." Instead, Colin advocates for a radical idea of teaching all students on their grade level by compacting the curriculum with rapid acceleration for all. All kids have a chance at being exceptional if the rules are changed just a bit!

Seale stated that the system upon which gifted education is based is deficit-based with a focus on learning loss and remediation. It is not right for some students to have to work twice as hard to get half as far. The teacher's role is to notice that the willful and defiant child is actually very curious. The child that talks constantly may be particularly collaborative and excels while working in teams.

A common complaint about gifted programs include, "Gifted programs are elitist and unfair." Gifted education is part of a bigger system that has flaws. Seale stated that in actuality, more gifted programs are needed to reach the very kids that are hurt by the equity problem. Instead of teaching to the middle, focus on the strategy used to teach the top 10% and use those strategies to benefit each child.

"Gifted kids are smart and if we don't give them special services, they will be just fine." Do we wish to have a "just fine" doctor? Do we wish to have a "just fine" lawyer? Every child deserves a challenge every day! Education is for each child."

– Colin Seale

Colin questioned how did 'just fine' become the outcome of education? "Gifted kids are smart and if we don't give them special services, they will be just fine." Do we wish to have a "just fine" doctor? Do we wish to have a "just fine" lawyer? Every child deserves a challenge every day! Education is for each child.

Colin advocated for schools to go beyond harder and faster to practical, sincere, sustainable curriculum that brings fun and joy to self and others. "Shift outcomes from all to each to give each child what they need, then we could see equity in real life."

For more information about Colin Seale, visit <https://www.thinklaw.us>.

N CAGT was honored for Colin Seale to open their 46th annual conference with a powerful keynote address.

Colin Seale was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, where struggles in his upbringing gave birth to his passion for educational equity. Tracked early into gifted and talented programs, Colin was afforded opportunities his neighborhood peers were not. Using lessons from his experience as a math teacher and an attorney, Colin founded thinkLaw, a multi-award-winning organization to help educators leverage inquiry-based instructional strategies to close the critical thinking gap and ensure they teach and REACH all students, regardless of race, zip code or what side of the poverty line they are born into. Colin has quickly become an important voice in education and has been a keynote speaker at several conventions; a contributor to *Forbes*, *The 74*, and *Education Post*; and author of *Thinking Like a Lawyer: A Framework for Teaching*

- Have students generate a list of solutions to a current problem such as the wildfires in Australia, the long lines in the school cafeteria, etc.

Divergent Thinking

Divergent thinking is the process of generating many ideas by exploring lots of possibilities for solving a problem. It differs from convergent thinking where individuals work to come to the same solution. Divergent thinking activities can help people exercise their creative muscles as they require children to offer suggestions about a topic that are quirky and unusual.

Grab a pencil or pen and a piece of paper. You will have one minute for this activity.

How many uses can you think of for a fork besides eating? Try to list 15 or more if you can!

What did you imagine?

- A pitchfork for a hamster
- An item to bend when you're practicing telekinesis
- A hair bush for a baby orangutan
- A catapult to launch spit wads across the room

- A place to hang your keys if you stick the fork in the wall
- A rake for making designs in the sand at the beach

Now try other objects such as a paper clip, straw, pipe cleaner and so on.

6-3-5/ C Sketch

6-3-5/ C Sketch is a brainstorming strategy used in various disciplines such as engineering and marketing. In this process, members of a team of 6 each create concept sketches for or describe 3 ideas for solving a problem. The team members rotate their sketches and notes around the table so that each of the other 5 team members adds to, enhances, or starts a new idea that was sparked by the original sketch. Of course, variations on 6-3-5/C Sketch might include the number of members in a group or the number of original ideas shared.

This technique can be quite helpful during PBL units and creative problem-solving experiences. When teams are assigned a problem or project, have team members start with this process to generate initial ideas for solving the problem.

For example, when Mrs. Watson starts a PBL unit where students are hypothetically granted \$1,000,000 dollars to solve a problem faced by their community, teams use the 6-3-5/C Sketch to generate ideas for solutions to the problem they have identified. Each student writes or draws three ideas and then passes their idea on to the person next to them. Each team member adds to what has been passed to them until each paper has made its way around to the other five team members.

In summary, as AIG students face the pressures of school life, both self and externally imposed, activities that require creativity can bring needed distraction from those pressures, boost their sense of wellbeing, and enhance their creative thinking.



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Teacher of the Year – Maureen Stover 2020 Burroughs Wellcome Fund North Carolina

By Jo LANDRETH



Maureen Stover

Maureen Stover, the 2020 Burroughs Wellcome North Carolina Teacher of the Year, a science teacher at Cumberland International Early College, shared her

message “Engaging Gifted Learners in Authentic Thinking” at this year’s virtual NCACT Conference. Building off her experience as a United States Air Force Academy student, a member of the U.S. Air Force, and as a high school teacher, Stover shared what it takes to teach gifted students and unlock the genius in every learner. Here are some highlights of her speech.

Stover reminisced about General Solo, who made her feel like her ideas and solutions were valuable. She said that he was a multiplier and a genius maker, and she offered that this should be a goal for educators. A multiplier makes everyone around them smarter by attracting talent, creating a space for the great ideas to percolate, formulating

challenges that generate ideas, fostering academic debate that hones in on the best ideas, and giving opportunity for ownership and valuing mistakes. She added that problem-based, student-centered lessons that enable students to realize success in science will unlock their genius. Incorporating lots of group work also gives students the opportunity to develop the 21st century skills of collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity.

Stover also explored the idea that this time period of learning during the pandemic has had its advantages. She stated that students have improved their communication skills; they have learned how to communicate through email,

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Greetings to you all from NCDPI!

"Welcome Summer" everyone. It is hard to believe Summer is here and soon we will be planning for a new school year. We have had quite a busy school year and we remain grateful for the opportunity to work with all of you to improve learning outcomes for gifted learners. Much has happened since the winter newsletter update to support the work of the greater gifted community, and we are happy to take a few moments to recap those events and also preview what's on the horizon with you now.

In December 2020, staff across various divisions at NCDPI collaborated to gather and report data to meet the requirements of the [Advanced Math](#)

[Course Enrollment Legislation](#). The Advanced Math report shares the number and demographic information for students participating in advanced learning opportunities in mathematics across grades 3-8 and students enrolled in advanced mathematics courses in grades six and higher. The full report provides an incredible baseline for further study and reflection and is available [here](#).

As the new year rolled in, our team welcomed the opportunity to host two additional institute experiences with follow up 'office hours' – in January and later in March – for AIG Coordinators. The winter and spring institutes were

incredible days of learning, focused on delving deeper into our multi-year statewide strategic initiative regarding equity and excellence in gifted education. As you may recall, in year one, our division released "[A Call To Action](#): Critical Actions to Realize Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education Changing Mindsets, Policies and Practices." *Increase access and opportunities to increase achievement and growth for all.* Fundamental to the Call to Action is the belief that to set the foundation for realizing both equity and excellence, we must approach it from the shared perspective that both can be realized and that both are integral to

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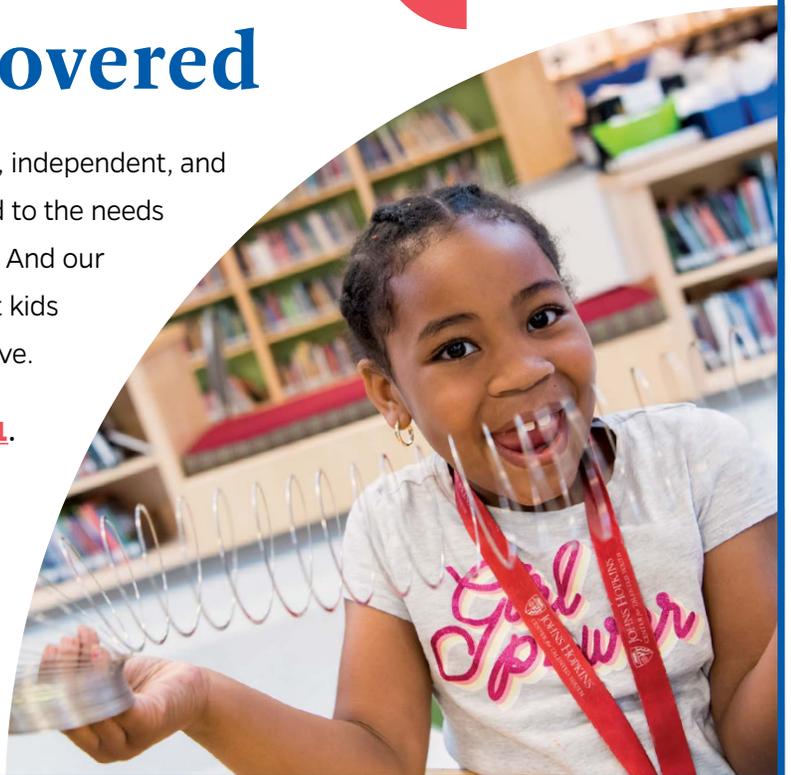
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a successful educational environment. This commitment toward equity and excellence is urgent and requires intentional and sustained actions. We further believe that no single action will change mindsets, policies, and practices; we must synergize efforts to increase achievement and growth for all.

During each of the institutes, we tackled three of the critical actions outlined in our Call to Action brief. Additionally, though, during the institutes, our team unveiled a new resource, the [Call to Action Guidebook](#) with our AIG Coordinators. The new Guidebook provides promising practices from schools and districts across NC aligned with each of the critical actions along with an expanded annotated bibliography to provide a research base of support for each action! We have been excited to see the enthusiasm around the Guidebook, and we are optimistic that the resource will be helpful to our state as we continue to grow and strengthen our gifted programs. NC has worked on many of these issues throughout the last decade, however, by raising the urgency and focusing on actions versus ideas with a variety of leaders in district and charter schools, we will further change mindsets, policies and practices and realize equity and excellence in gifted education.

To that end, in March 2021, Division of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education Director, Sneha Shah Coltrane, accepted the invitation to share an update on our multi-year strategic initiative with the State Board of Education (SBE). The presentation slide deck and archived recording are available here on the [Equity and Excellence Strategic Initiative](#) page of our division Google site. We have also shared about the strategic initiative and the Guidebook resource with a variety of other audiences this year, including

the NCAGT family, the Council of State Directors of Gifted Programs, NC's IHE community, and aspiring school administrators; plans are in the works to share this summer with superintendents and other district and teacher leaders. Moreover, NAGC has recently published a blogpost co-written by Dr. Matt Makel and Sneha Shah Coltrane, overviews the 'Call to Action' work, which can be accessed on the [NAGC website](#), so the message is spreading across the nation! Take a moment to check out the quick recap of the strategic initiative! It is our hope that sharing the message to a variety of audiences – both within NC and beyond, will open doors and support your advocacy efforts. Let us know if you have ideas about how we can further spread the word, or if we can share any resources with you to advance this work in your local community.

In addition to this work around the strategic initiative, NCDPI was glad to support the annual NCAGT conference! Our team of colleagues across the agency presented information in all of the various presentation types with topics ranging from strategies to support EL learners, the changing world of AP during this time of

COVID, strategies to support student engagement during a time of remote learning, and various content area sessions to support individual teacher practice. We invite you to visit our [division Google site](#) to learn more about these informational sessions.

As we close, please remember that if we can ever be of service to you, feel free to contact one of us at NCDPI. We continue to be grateful to each of you for your hard work and your passion for AIG learners.

– The NCDPI team

The NCDPI team

Contact Information:

Stephanie Cyrus, Consultant AIG and Advanced Programs
stephanie.cyrus@dpi.nc.gov

Beth Cross, Consultant AIG and Advanced Programs
beth.cross@dpi.nc.gov

Crissy Brown, Consultant Honors, AIG & CCP
crissy.brown@dpi.nc.gov

Sneha Shah Coltrane, Director, Advanced Learning
sneha.shahcoltrane@dpi.nc.gov



Using thinkLAW with Upper Elementary Students

By MEREDITH EWBank
SOUTH GRAHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“Are we going to do the government case today?” • “I’ll be the judge!” • “Can I be a lawyer?”

I laughed as my 5th graders logged into my Zoom meeting during the first week back to remote learning in January. Their chat messages had all of us laughing; I was simply excited! My students were finally **interested** in something being taught virtually!

After using Colin Seale’s thinkLAW curriculum with my 4th grade students during the first half of the school year (the students were more engaged with these lessons than with anything else we had done!), I introduced thinkLAW to my 5th graders after the winter break. The fifth grade reading AIG and enrichment students at South Graham Elementary School spent the first half of the year reading *The Birchbark House*. We discussed the Anishinaabe culture and discovered the impact of westward expansion on the tribe. Students were especially distraught by the idea that Europeans could force the Native Americans to leave their land and relocate somewhere new.

Enter thinkLAW! The introduction to legal writing lesson for upper elementary students focuses on property law, a perfect connection to students’ interest in Native American relocation and in alignment with the district writing pacing guide: opinion

writing. Through the thinkLAW cases, students have really shown their opinions on property rights and ownership, often initially disagreeing with their classmates, but always providing support for their reasons. By the end of each lesson, students generally come to the same conclusion based on the law or rule shared in the lesson and present their opinion in a paragraph that acknowledges both sides of the argument and the importance of the decision outside of the single case. The writing framework used in thinkLAW has really helped my wordy writers hone in on what is most important in

defending their opinion, and students are beginning to develop strong, well-organized opinion paragraphs!

I am looking forward to facilitating students’ application of the various property laws discussed through thinkLAW to the relocation of the Anishinaabe and other Native American tribes. My students were vehement that relocation was wrong, and I expect that the thinkLAW exploration of property rights and ownership will encourage them to question what exactly happened and what the rules or laws were at the time.





by SHELAGH GALLAGHER

North Carolina Builds its National Presence on the Equity Question

North Carolina was well represented nationally in March. The annual NAGC Leadership and Advocacy Conference featured two North Carolinians. Mr. Rodney Pierce, middle school teacher from Nash County, Javits-Frasier Scholar, and member of the NCAAGT Talent Delayed/Talent Denied Advisory Committee, made a stirring presentation titled ***A Lesson from History – Importance of a Big Tent – Philosophical Diversity Toward a Shared Goal***. He used the life and work of Adam Clayton Powell, landmark Black politician and head of the influential congressional Education and Labor Committee, to

emphasize the importance of being a maverick and understanding your audience when advocating for a cause. A great message for us all!

In a lunchtime presentation, Dr. Shelagh Gallagher gave NAGC attendees an update on NCAAGT's contributions towards equity in gifted education through its *Talent Delayed/Talent Denied II* conference, the ongoing (and expanded!) Talent Delayed/Talent Denied Advisory Committee, and *Talent Unleashed*. Conversation following the presentation centered around the question, "How can other states do what North Carolina is doing?"

NAGC published a blog authored by former TIP Research Specialist Dr. Matthew Makel (now an associate research scientist in the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University) and NCDPI Director of the Division of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education Sneha Shah Coltrane, describing the DPI's new *Guidebook for Action* that accompanies the department's Six Point Call to Action on Equity. You can read their blog post here: <https://www.nagc.org/blog/equity-and-excellence-building-ncs-guidebook-action>.

Want Gifted Education with an International Flair? Attend the World Council for Gifted Education Online conference this summer!

A silver lining of the pandemic is that many events that would be out of reach for most educators are now just a mouse-click away! That's especially true of the biennial meeting of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. The WCGTC meeting was supposed to meet in the city of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. The planning team is taking an unusual approach, holding the conference over two consecutive weekends, July 31 & August 1st and August 7th-8th. Sessions are timed to meet the needs of professionals world-wide. For more information, go to the WCGTC website: <https://worldgifted2021.com/about/why-attend-the-world-conference/>.

Teacher of Year – Maureen Stover (continued from page 7)

how to drop files in the chat, and how to collaborate on Jamboard. She hopes that educators take this opportunity to redefine the way that we teach. We now have systems in place to personalize instruction and design learning materials for students who are absent or need extra practice and the ability to provide direct instruction to multiple groups

of students simultaneously and to reteach students who need enrichment, remediation, or extra practice. She stated, "Equity begins in the public school system with us being able to personalize instruction."

Finally, Stover left the membership with several challenges; be a genius-

maker, not the genius; have a team mentality; provide a framework for others (e.g., students and colleagues) to succeed, and leverage strengths. She ended by saying, "Your goal is not to be a better teacher than anyone else. The goal is to be a better teacher than you ever thought you could be."

Meet the Board Member – Dibrelle Tourret



Dibrelle and her family

Dibrelle Tourret is the Director of Academically Gifted Services in Guilford County Schools (Greensboro) and current president of NCACT. Dibrelle earned her BA from Davidson College, majoring in French and moved to France after graduation

to teach English and French in a French Middle School. She met her husband, Alain, an officer in the French Army there, and they lived in France nine years before Alain retired from the Army. They brought their two daughters back to the United States where Dibrelle and her husband both found positions teaching French in area high schools. Dibrelle earned her master's degree at UNCG and had her third child before accepting a position at the District Office over gifted programming.

Dibrelle grew up saying that she would never enter the field of education – her mother, her father, aunts, and uncles were all educators, and she wanted to blaze her own path, which she did by heading off to another country where she promptly fell right into education. She feels like it was

destined to be, despite her efforts to the contrary. Dibrelle's mother, Ann Barr, earned her Master's in Gifted Ed at the University of Georgia before moving to North Carolina where she found herself among the very first educators in the state certified in gifted instruction. Dibrelle remembers listening to cassette tapes of Carol Ann Tomlinson and Joe Renzulli on family road trips and having conversations around the dinner table about meeting the unique needs of kids who "don't look needy." She finds it ironic that she currently holds the same district position and the same NCACT role that her mother once held – and while she misses baguette with brie and the laid-back rhythm of the romantic French lifestyle, she wouldn't change her current commitments and passions for the world.

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The Role of Creativity in Lesson Planning for the Gifted

By Dr. Shirley Disseler, High Point University



Dr. Shirley Disseler

Understanding how to meet the needs of gifted students is often a challenge, especially in the classroom. Gifted students are often difficult to spot and are sometimes misidentified leaving teachers to serve them just like everyone else in the

class. Planning for them is important, nonetheless. When planning for gifted students, teachers need some creative strategies that differentiate the format, process, and outcomes expected of these high achieving students. One of the most optimal strategies in math for example, is to assign the most difficult problems first. Do not expect them to do 25 mundane problems, when they could demonstrate mastery of the topic from the beginning (Azzam, A. 2016). Being creative in planning lessons takes on a new meaning with gifted education. Schools seem to focus on standardized programming across the board, but research shows that creativity plays a huge role in allowing students to think critically, problem solve, and develop skills that will prepare them for the use of their

full critical thinking potential (Piske et al, 2014). Creativity is defined in a plethora of ways throughout the literature on gifted education, however, most experts agree that the rigor and relevance situated within more creative and design thinking-based activities supports the inner desires of gifted children to develop solutions to real world problems that are unique and offer a better context for their learning than traditional assignments. (Zosh, J.; Hopkins, E.; Jensen, H.; Liu, C.; Neale, D.; Hirsh-Pasek, K.; Solis, S.; & Whitebread, D. 2017; Gallagher, A. & Thordarson, K., 2018; Nash, J. 2019).

The world is not designed for workers that memorize content, it is designed for workers that apply content in

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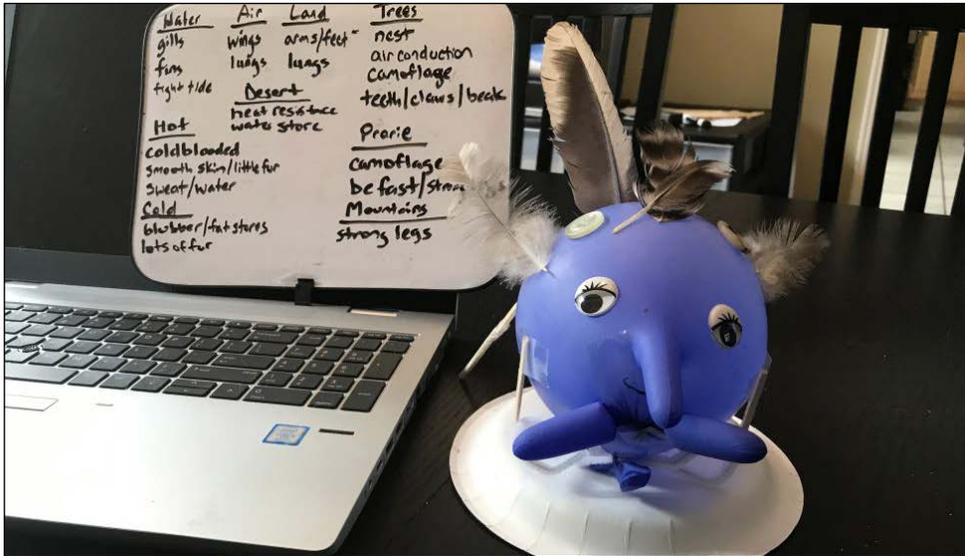
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creative ways and design unique solutions to old and new problems. The role of creativity in planning lessons should provide a sense of real world relevance for students that leads them to design solutions not just identify answers. Cohen (2018), author of *Educated for Design*, along with Spencer (2016), an advocate for Design Thinking, agree that students (especially gifted students) need the opportunity to plan, ideate, prototype, pitch, and revise ideas that utilize and apply content knowledge if they are to grow their mindset around creative problem solving and critical thinking. Jo Boaler (2019) makes the point that from the minute we enter school, we are made to feel as if our brains are fixed entities, only capable of learning things in a specific way. This follows us into adulthood and poses problems when we are asked to do creative things in the workplace. Brain research shows that our brain's neuroplasticity increases the more we are challenged with creative problems to solve.

Teachers need strategies that will help them plan for this challenge in new ways for the students that require more than the provided curriculum. Some of the strategies recommended by this author that have been proven

to work, and provide a more creative use of the content include; menu and choice boards, problem-based learning, tiered instructional tasks, compacting the curriculum based on what students know going into the content and personal interest learning (PIL). Providing teachers with some professional development on planning in order to support the high achieving learners would be a recommendation for those in the area of curriculum planning. All teachers, not just those certified as gifted teachers, need to know about creative strategies that empower learners to gain a more flexible mindset and demonstrate their creative

potential because the role of creativity in the parts of the brain that support retention and learning is extensive. Research on creativity and math (Gregorie, 2016; Sriraman, 2005) suggests that education could have greater influence on how students see math more creatively in three areas; creative expertise, original thinking, and intrinsic motivation all of which inform one's creative nature (p. 23). Planning lessons, for example, that present a challenge to be addressed or a problem to be solved as the lead into the content creates an environment of high interest, relevance, and personal attachment. Gifted students are often very passionate about specific topics and this approach garners their attention from the very beginning of the lesson. Also, grouping gifted students together poses a sense of challenge and discussion that can lead to a greater depth in problem solving and critical thinking. Gifted camps are also important avenues for extended lessons geared toward specific content of student interest such as medicine, robotics, and arts. Present research in neuroscience suggests that the more creative the lesson and the planned assignments the more deeply gifted students will engage. The role of creativity in planning is the key to opening up the world and preparing our gifted students for the future before them.

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