Independent Study for Gifted Learners  

That's what education means, to be able to do what you've never done before.

A. F. Palmer

Children have a natural curiosity. Remember all the questions young children ask just because they want to know the answers? “Why is the grass green?” “What makes the picture on TV?” “Why does my nose run?” “How did the mountain grow so tall?” “Why can’t animals talk like me?” Life is full of wonders. One of the most important charges to teachers and to parents is to nurture the natural wondering of our students and children and help them learn ways to answer the questions they have.

Independent study helps students learn ways of answering their questions. It is a process that students use when they research a new topic by themselves or with others. The process is cyclical and includes a variety of steps that engage the students in acting like professionals such as posing questions, gathering information related to the questions, organizing the information and presenting the information to an audience. The content can focus on “real-world investigations” (Renzulli & Reis, 1991, p. 131) where “students have opportunities to go beyond the usual time and space restrictions of most school activities” (Betts, 1985, p. 55). However, even gifted students need assistance from the teacher or their parents in acquiring the skills necessary to complete an independent study. Independent study therefore includes these important components:

- The students’ questions form the basis of the study.
- The study is self-directed.
- The method used in the process is similar to one used by a practicing professional.
- The teacher or mentor monitors and facilitates the independent study.
- The study problems go beyond the regular class setting.

Independent study is the most frequently recommended instructional strategy for teachers of gifted and talented students (Clark, 2002; Colangelo & Davis, 2003; Coleman & Cross, 2005; Davis & Rimm, 1998; Rogers, 2002). Using this strategy, gifted students are able to pursue a topic in greater depth at their pace either alone or with professionals who are interested in the same area of study. Most students, particularly those who are gifted and talented, enjoy instructional strategies that are meaningful and emphasize independence (Dunn & Griggs, 1985; Renzulli, 1977; Stewart, 1981). However, while most gifted students enjoy learning independently, they do not always have the necessary skills to complete a project successfully.

(Continued on page 3)
From the Director

Dear Friends:

The year 2009 marks the 30th anniversary of the Center for Gifted Studies. It was founded in 1979 and dedicated as The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies in 1999. Prior to 1979, there were programs and services for students, parents and teachers; however, the need to have an identity was recognized by Dr. Aubrey Lucas, and, thus, the Center was established. Throughout 2009, there will be programs and celebrations to mark this event. Our goal continues to be able to fully fund the Frances A. Karnes Endowed Chair.

This issue of the newsletter focuses on independent study for gifted students. All gifted students need to know the process of conducting an independent study and sharing their findings with others. Recent Center research is focused on implementing the Continuous Progress Curriculum model with four public school districts in the state of Mississippi. One elementary school in each district will develop a plan in the area of reading.

Thank you to all those who have helped to make 30 years of serving gifted children, teachers, and parents a reality for The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies.

Sincerely,

Frances A. Karnes, Ph.D.
Professor, Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education
and Director, The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies

Thank You! Thank You!

We wish to thank our donors who have continued to support the Frances A. Karnes Endowed Scholarship, the Christopher J. Karnes Gifted Education Memorial Fund, the Summer Program for Academically Talented Youth, and Friends for Gifted Education. The Friends fund was established in 1999 for scholarships for needy and eligible students to attend our summer programs and the Saturday Gifted Studies Program.

Program Sponsors

Sponsorships for our programs also provide necessary funding for program support and student scholarships. Programs and sponsors are

Saturday Gifted Studies Program
Purple Parrot Café
Crescent City Grill
Coldwell Banker

Leadership Studies Program
Summer Gifted Studies Program

Summer Program for Academically Talented Youth

Forrest General Hospital

Mission Statement

Beginning in 1974, programs and other endeavors in gifted education were initiated at The University of Southern Mississippi. The Center for Gifted Studies was established in 1979 and dedicated as The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies in 1999, its central purpose to further the education of gifted students and those with leadership abilities through teaching, research, and service. Emphasis is also placed on these areas for those interested in the gifted: teachers, parents, administrators, psychologists, counselors and other concerned citizens.

Services

Many services are offered through the Center. Instructional programs are provided for intellectually gifted students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12. The Saturday Gifted Studies Program provides instruction for students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade for seven consecutive Saturdays during the months of January and February. The Summer Gifted Studies Program, a one-week residential program, serves youth in grades four through eight, while the Summer Program for Academically Talented Youth, a three-week residential program, serves students in grades seven through 10. The Leadership Studies Program is a one-week summer residential program designed to develop leadership concepts and skills and is offered for students enrolled in grades six through 11. Leadership competitions are held for students in grades seven through 12 each year and are designed to develop leadership skills and style and to build self-confidence. Teacher training and staff development are provided for regular education personnel and for teachers who specialize in gifted education. A conference for parents of gifted youth and other concerned adults is provided on an annual basis. In addition, research is conducted in rural and urban schools in response to issues in the field of gifted education.
To teach independent study skills, Johnsen and Johnson (2007) have identified nine different steps in the independent study process (see “Planning My Study”). These steps are not necessarily sequential, but are more cyclical and based on the student’s progress. For example, the student may be collecting information, step six, and identify more interesting questions that he or she would like to add to the study, step four. Therefore, each of the steps may lead to the next step, to previous steps or to future steps based on the student’s performance. The teacher may decide to skip steps, guide the student through some of the steps, or allow the students to do some of the steps independently. For these reasons, the independent study process should be used as a framework with the teacher and the student developing each step more fully based on the student’s prior knowledge and skills. The remainder of the article provides an overview of each step in the independent study process and how to develop a plan with a student.

**Step 1: Planning the Independent Study.** In the first step, the teacher introduces the students to a plan, explains each of the steps that will guide them through the process, and identifies possible dates and audiences. For an independent study to be meaningful, the students will not only need to be interested in the topic but also have an audience that will be interested in their study.

**Step 2: Selecting a Topic.** Next, students select a topic about which they want to learn. The topic needs to be not only broad enough for posing meaningful questions but also small enough so that students can examine their questions deeply. In selecting their topics, students may want to consider these questions: Which topic is the most interesting? Which topic can they study best with the available resources and in the time allotted?

**Step 3: Organizing a Topic.** In this step, students arrange their topics in one of four ways to help them find specific questions to ask. In organizing their topic using descriptions, for example, they may want to know about their topic’s history or how it has changed over time or its stages or its habits and so on. In organizing with comparisons, they may want to describe the similarities and differences between their topic and another topic, a perfect model, or a rule. In organizing with causes and effects, they may want to examine how their topic has changed or may change. In organizing with problems and solutions, students may want to explore a difficult situation, question or puzzle in order to think of possible solutions.

**Step 4: Asking Questions.** Every good research project begins with a meaningful question, something the student wants to know more about. Effective study questions (a) elicit many possible answers, (b) need time to research them, (c) have available resources and (d) are useful or beneficial to others. A student’s questions might be enhanced by using the “W” and “H” words – who, what when, where and how — that require higher levels of thinking. Questions are the driving force behind the entire independent study and ultimately determine the type of product or performance that students will create.

**Step 5: Using a Study Method.** The questions will influence the type of study method that a student selects. For example, if a student asks a question that requires them to describe something with numbers or facts, they might gather information in the form of surveys, questionnaires, interviews, observations, test scores, and records (e.g., in our grade, what is the average amount of time students use computers each day?). On the other hand, if a student is interested in “How did the different schools in our town get their names?” they would use an historical study method identifying primary and secondary sources of information. Students have opportunities to use a variety of research methods in addressing their questions such as developmental, case, action, correlational, experimental, or quasi-experimental designs.

**Step 6: Collecting Information.** Information can be gathered from a variety of sources — Internet, places, people, print, text and so on. Students need to learn how to gather information from multiple sources to ensure that they have accurate and varied perspectives and that their information is unbiased. Students can obtain information from their sources by interviewing, conducting experiments, observing, reading, surveying and writing a letter or e-mail. The sources and ways of obtaining information will vary based on the specific questions that are asked. After the information is collected, the student will organize it in some way by taking notes, classifying, outlining, Webbing or summarizing.

**Step 7: Developing a Product.** The main purpose for developing a product is for the students to share information with others about the answers to their study questions. Products may include books, creative dramas, diagrams, dioramas, games, graphs, newsletters, oral reports, PowerPoint presentations, puppet shows, tape recordings, television shows on DVDs, timelines, Web pages, written reports and so on. The students decide on a product that will best suit the purpose and the audience, develops a product plan, learn specific techniques for

(Continued on page 4)
designing their products and ultimately create their products.

Step 8: Presenting Information. Students present information to an audience using oral reports, demonstrations, performances, displays or electronic displays. At this step, they learn how to prepare the materials, time their talk, develop notes and improve their presentations through practice. They also learn how to get feedback, improve their products and gain support for their ideas.

Step 9: Evaluating the Study. The final step is an important time for students to reflect about the process of independent study, their products and their presentations. They examine their work and identify strengths and weaknesses of the study. Three audiences might be included in the evaluation of the students’ studies — themselves, the teacher, and other people who watched or listened to their presentation. The evaluation may also end with a celebration of the students’ learning such as a presentation day for parents, a museum display, a class newsletter, and/or posting digital photos on the school Web site.

This article has provided just a brief overview of the independent study process. For more information, teachers and parents may want to read the Independent Study Program (Johnsen & Johnson, 2007) or Independent Study for Gifted Learners (Johnsen & Goree, 2008).

References


Planning My Study  
Johnsen and Johnson, 2007

Directions: As you go through your Independent Study, check (√) the steps you use. Only some of these steps will apply to your study. Check all that apply.

☐ Selecting a Topic  
☐ Subtopic of a class unit  
☐ Something I was curious about  
☐ Something I wanted to learn more about  
☐ Something I know a lot about

☐ Organizing a Topic  
☐ Description  ☐ Causes and Effects  
☐ Comparison  ☐ Problems and Solutions

☐ Asking Questions  
☐ Used stem words  
☐ Wrote Little Thinking Questions  
☐ Wrote More Thinking Questions  
☐ Wrote Most Thinking Questions

☐ Using a Study Method  
☐ Descriptive  ☐ Correlation  
☐ Historical  ☐ Action  
☐ Developmental  ☐ Experimental  
☐ Case Study  ☐ Factual Information

☐ Collecting Information  
☐ Information Sources: Ways to Collect:  
☐ Internet  ☐ Interview  
☐ Electronic  ☐ Experiment  
☐ Places  ☐ Observation  
☐ People  ☐ Reading  
☐ Print/Text  ☐ Correspondence

☐ Developing a Product  
☐ Reviewed various products  
☐ Developed a plan  
☐ Product created

☐ Presenting Information  
☐ Oral Report  
☐ Demonstration  
☐ Performance  
☐ Display  
☐ Electronic Display

☐ Evaluating the Study  
☐ Self  
☐ Teacher  
☐ Audience
2008 FALL DAY OF SHARING

The Day of Sharing for Teachers of the Gifted was held on Friday, September 5, 2008, at the R.C. Cook Union on the campus of The University of Southern Mississippi. The conference is designed to educate teachers on current curriculum and instructional issues in gifted education. Teachers of the gifted, regular education teachers, psychologists and administrators were encouraged to attend. Keynote speaker Ms. Lindy Hopkins is a former teacher of the gifted and Mississippi Teacher of the Year. She presented on the topic entitled Motivating Gifted Children to Achieve.

Other sessions were lead by Dr. Emily Bullock, assistant professor for the Department of Psychology at The University of Southern Mississippi, who presented Career Explorations for Gifted Students. Tracy Williams, former administrator for Hattiesburg Public School District, presented Continuous Progress Curriculum. Trecina Green, director for Office of Curriculum & Instruction for the Mississippi State Department of Education, presented Gifted Education in Mississippi.

Afterward, several teachers were given time to share activities and ideas that they use in their classrooms.

2008 PARENTING GIFTED CHILDREN CONFERENCE

The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies held its 25th Annual Parenting Gifted Children Conference in September. The conference was offered to assist parents and other concerned adults to better understand the unique intellectual, academic, and social/emotional needs of the gifted and talented.

Ms. Lindy Hopkins, NBCT, former teacher of the gifted in Mississippi was the keynote speaker and spoke about Motivating Gifted Children to Achieve. Lindy was also Mississippi Teacher of the Year for 2005-06.

Other sessions conducted during the conference included What Parents Should Know About Gifted Education in MS, Evaluating Gifted Children: IQ Tests and How to Understand the Results, Career Explorations for Gifted Children, Social/Emotional Issues of Gifted Children, and Parent Advocacy.

The keynote address was given by Lindy Hopkins, NBCT, former teacher of the gifted in Mississippi.
The Continuous Progress Curriculum Model for Elementary Schools is designed to organize schools around the instruction of students through established elementary curricula. This model is based on the premise that when adults organize around the needs of the students, student achievement increases. It is focused on (1) creating multiple entry points in which students of any age or academic strength may enter into an instructional setting that is designed to meet them where they currently are functioning and take them as far and as fast as they can possibly go, and (2) providing training and continuous support for teachers and administrators through (a) periodic progress monitoring and data gathering and interpretation, and (b) review of periodic progress data by assisting teachers and administrators on scheduling methods and flexible instructional grouping scenarios.

The University of Southern Mississippi will administer the project, Continuous Progress Curriculum Model for Elementary Schools. The project began June 1, 2008, and will continue until May 31, 2009. Dr. Frances A. Karnes is the grant director and Tracy Williams is the educational consultant.

The project provides training and technical support to four local school districts in order that they may establish an individualized plan for the implementation of a continuous progress curriculum. This portion of the project began by selecting one elementary school within four districts and providing an orientation meeting for each superintendent, principal and their selected teacher leaders. Each school will be provided initial training by an educational consultant who will then visit each school a minimum of one time per month to provide technical assistance and guidance to establish a curriculum committee charged with creating the individualized plan for implementation. The elementary level project director and educational consultant will each month assess the school's progress toward completion of the implementation plan, assisting school personnel as needed and will ensure that a viable plan is created at the end of the project.

Target areas to be served are kindergarten through third grade reading. Participating elementary schools' districts will be provided a model in which their students progress through the established reading curricula, and also may be replicated into other subject areas and grade levels so that all students may benefit from moving through curricula at an accelerated rate.

Methods and Materials Third Edition Published

The third edition of Methods and Materials for Teaching the Gifted, co-edited by Dr. Frances A. Karnes and Dr. Suzanne Bean, has been published by Prufrock Press. In this edition of the definitive resource, the leading experts in the field of gifted education give updated strategies and resources for differentiating instruction for gifted learners. The contributors offer research-based methods for developing appropriate learning environments, blending advanced content with instructional processes and selecting products that match the needs of gifted students. The fully revised text also lists an array of current books, teaching materials, Web sites and other resources.
LEADERSHIP STUDIES PROGRAM
JUNE 14 – 19, 2009

The Leadership Studies Program, a one-week residential program, is designed for students in grades six through 11 who have a desire to develop and enhance their leadership abilities. Students will be housed in dormitories on the campus of The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Tuition includes room, board, recreational activities and limited accident insurance. Leadership I is a program with specific emphasis on leadership skills. Training will include those areas necessary for leadership development: fundamentals of leadership, written and oral communication, group dynamics, problem solving, planning, personal skills and decision making. Avenues for becoming leaders in the schools, communities and religious affiliations will be utilized to heighten the awareness and development of leadership potential. Leadership II is a continuation of the program, with Leadership I as a prerequisite for entry. It is an intense study to further develop leadership concepts and qualities. Emphasis is placed on the psychology of leadership, assertiveness training, and situational leadership. Leadership III is an extension of the program, with Leadership II as a prerequisite for entry. Training will focus on the legal aspects of leadership, responsibilities of various positions of leadership, developing personal power, and leadership for the future. The students also have the opportunity for informal interaction with adult leaders. Financial aid is available based on need, on a limited basis.

SUMMER GIFTED STUDIES PROGRAM
JUNE 21 – 26, 2009

The Summer Gifted Studies Program, a one-week residential program, is designed for intellectually gifted students in grades four through eight with intelligence quotients of 120 or above on an individually administered test or the 90th percentile or above at the national level on an achievement test. The program enhances the cognitive abilities of gifted students through planned enrichment/acceleration activities. Content areas are combined with processing skills to enable students to explore a wide variety of topics. Students will be housed in dormitories on the campus of The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. Instructional activities will be conducted in classrooms and laboratories on the campus. Recreational activities and cultural events will be included, based upon availability. Tuition includes room, board, recreational and cultural activities, and limited accident insurance. Financial aid is available based on need, on a limited basis.

SUMMER PROGRAM FOR ACADEMICALLY TALENTED YOUTH
JULY 5 – 24, 2009

The Summer Program for Academically Talented Youth, a three-week residential program, is designed for students in grades seven through 10 who qualify based on SAT or ACT results. A variety of intensive, fast-paced courses will be offered, such as mathematics, including Algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry, calculus and modern analysis; human anatomy/physiology; marine biology; forensic science; polymer science; economics; psychology; criminal justice; creative writing; and debate. The program is designed to include appropriate academic, cultural and recreational experiences. The University of Southern Mississippi offers the program through cooperative efforts with the Duke University Talent Identification Program. Tuition includes the instructional program, books, room and board, recreational activities, and limited accident insurance. Financial aid is available based on need, on a limited basis.

WHAT IS MAGC?

Founded by parents and teachers in 1974, Mississippi Association for Gifted Children (MAGC) is a nonprofit organization that serves as a public advocate for gifted children and youth in the state of Mississippi. MAGC is the only state-level organization specifically for the gifted. In 1988, MAGC initiated legislation that resulted in state-mandated gifted programs and their funding in all Mississippi public school districts.

For information regarding membership in MAGC, please contact
MAGC
P.O. Box 3545
Jackson, MS 39207
www.msms.k12.ms.us/MAGC

Visit the Duke University TIP Program Web site at www.tip.duke.edu for more information on Duke TIP Interactive CD-ROM courses; Duke Gifted Letter for parents; and Duke TIP on Your Own courses.
ELIZABETH SHAUNESSY, PH.D., is an assistant professor and coordinator of gifted education at the University of South Florida. She teaches graduate courses leading to the Master of Arts degree in gifted. She’s currently on the Board of Directors for Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SEnG), and was at the 2008 annual SENG Summit in Salt Lake City, Utah, and is coordinating the 2009 SENG Summit, which will be in Orlando, Florida, in July 2009. Dr. Shaunessy presented at the 2008 National Association for the Gifted conference in Tampa, FL. Her current research projects include technology infusion among teachers of the gifted, second language learners in gifted education, and social-emotional needs of international baccalaureate students. She recently co-authored an article titled “An Independent Investigation of the Validity of the School Attitudes Survey—Revised,” which appeared in a recent issue of the Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment.

DEBRA TROXCLAIR, PH.D., assistant professor at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, spent the last year teaching graduate courses in gifted education, reading methods courses to undergraduate students and supervising student teachers. Additionally, she presented last fall at the Texas Association for Gifted and Talented conference in Houston and at Lamar University’s Educational Research Conference in Beaumont, Texas. Her TAGT conference presentation, Understanding Young Gifted Children, is available as an online resource on the TAGT Web site. In July, she presented a session on overprotective parents at the SENG Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. She also published an article for the Duke Tip Parent Letter on overprotective parents. She is currently working on research studies about overprotective parents and on undergraduate teacher candidates’ attitudes towards giftedness.

AMY BISLAND is employed as an enrichment specialist with Hoover City Schools in Hoover, Alabama. She serves as the membership coordinator for Alabama Association for Gifted Children and is currently an adjunct instructor for online courses in gifted education at the University of South Alabama and the University of South Florida. Amy married Danny Mims in Birmingham, AL on June 28, 2008.

KEVIN D. BESNOY, PH.D., is an assistant professor at Northern Kentucky University in the College of Education and Human Services. In addition to teaching gifted education courses, he teaches elementary and middle grades education in the department of Teacher Education and School Leadership. Kevin recently helped found the Northern Kentucky University Institute for Talent Development and Gifted Studies and is the co-director of the institute. Kevin received a grant to investigate the impact that handheld computers have on social studies content area reading comprehension in eighth graders.

JESSE RACHEL CUKIERKORN, PH.D., shared a presentation in November 2008, “Help Your Young Artist Reach their Potential in the Classroom and Beyond: Data, Tools and Strategies” at the 55th Annual Convention of the National Association for Gifted Children in Tampa, Florida. She was the lead author for the article “Recognizing Giftedness: Defining High Ability in Young Children,” published in the Spring/Summer 2008 issue of Dimensions of Early Childhood. This article includes some delightful vignettes that were collected and edited by Jesse and her colleagues at the Center, each one specifically chosen to demonstrate the characteristics of preschool gifted children. Jesse teaches for Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

JOAN D. LEWIS, PH.D., was promoted to professor effective fall 2008. Her book, Advocacy for Gifted Children and Gifted Programs (The Practical Strategies Series in Gifted Education), was published by Prufrock Press in March. Dr. Lewis presented at two state conferences on how educators and parents could advocate for gifted education in their schools based on research data about the ways principals support gifted education. NAGC selected a proposal with a similar focus based on a survey administered to 1,200 principals in six states for the prestigious Signature Series for their fall 2008 conference.
MICHAEL SAMEL graduated from the Mississippi School for Math and Science in May 2008 and matriculated to the Honors College at Southern Miss where he is a Presidential Scholar. Michael was intensively involved with the Center, having attended the Saturday Gifted Studies Program from 1997-2001, the Summer Gifted Studies Program from 2000-03, and the Summer Program from Academically Talented in 2004.

SHELLEY SHOEMAKE attended the Saturday Gifted Studies Program from 1983-86. She received her Bachelor of Science in exercise physiology from Southern Miss, and is a Doctor of Chiropractic from Life University. She currently owns Seminary Chiropractic Clinic. Her interests include singing and hot air balloons.

BRADLEY ALLEN BOONE, M.D., attended the Summer Gifted Studies Program in 1980. He’s currently the second vice-president at Riley Hospital in Meridian, Mississippi where he is a general and vascular surgeon in the Medical Arts Surgical Group. Bradley is a past president of the East Mississippi State Medical Society and is currently a vestry at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Meridian. He enjoys fly-fishing, hunting, natural history, and Louisiana cooking.

TAI CURRY attended the Saturday Gifted Studies Program from 1988-93 and 1995-98. She received her Bachelor of Science in biological sciences from Southern Miss in 2003 and her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Mississippi State University in April 2008. Her interests include equine sports medicine, lameness, rehabilitation and alternative therapy. She’s co-authored several research publications and was recently accepted into the Chi Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine and licensed in equine acupuncture in December 2008. She was married on September 6, 2008, to John Paul Fox III in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

PERRY PARKER graduated from The University of Southern Mississippi in 1985 with a degree in business administration and economics. In 1989, he received an MBA from the University of Chicago. Perry is currently working with LiquidMacro where he is a portfolio manager and partner in the Global Macro Discretionary Hedge Fund. He enjoys participating in triathlons and spending time with his wife Ida and two sons, Beaumont and Harry, aged 13 and 11. Perry attended Center programs in 1976 and 1977.

JAMES JOB attended the Leadership Studies Program in 1988 and the Saturday Gifted Studies Program from 1986-91. James received an associate’s degree from Jones County Junior College and is currently back in school to get a degree in marketing.

SCOTT JOB is living in Gautier, Mississippi with his wife Lesley and his three year old son, Wesley. Scott received his bachelor’s degree in business in 2004. He is currently working as a kitchen manager at the Hard Rock Café in Hard Rock Casino, Biloxi. Scott attended the Saturday Gifted Studies Program in 1991.
1973 Collaboration was conducted with legislators to have gifted education included in the definition of exceptional children in the state statute.

1974 The first statewide conference on gifted children was conducted with support from a grant awarded by the Mississippi Committee for the Humanities.

1974 The Mississippi Association for Gifted Children, formerly the Mississippi Association for Talented and Gifted, was founded as a statewide effort to support all children, especially those with outstanding abilities.

1974 Graduate degree programs and teacher certification courses were established to provide leadership within the state and region.

1976 The first nonresidential program for high ability seventh graders began.

1978 The Summer Gifted Studies Program, the first statewide residential program for intellectually gifted students, was established.

1979 The Saturday Gifted Studies Program was initiated to serve intellectually gifted youth in kindergarten through grade 12.

1982 The Staff Development Program for teachers and other professionals offered twice annually was introduced.

1982 The Leadership Studies Program, a summer residential program, was initiated for students in grades six through 11 to develop and/or enhance their leadership abilities.

1984 The Parenting Gifted Children Conference was initiated to assist parents and other adults in understanding the unique abilities of gifted students.

1986 The Duke Talent Awards Ceremony to honor seventh grade students scoring as well as, or better than, college freshmen on the ACT or SAT was begun.

1987 Specific legislation to mandate gifted education in Mississippi was initiated. The legislature passed the Gifted Education Act of 1989, to be fully funded in 1993. To date, full funding has not been provided.

1988 The Summer Program for Academically Talented Youth, a summer residential program, was established in conjunction with Duke University to serve students in grades seven through ten with exceptionally high academic abilities.

1997 The Frances A. Karnes Endowed Scholarship was initiated to provide scholarships to graduate students in gifted education.

1998 The Christopher J. Karnes Gifted Education Memorial Fund was established to provide scholarships to assist students in attending summer residential programs and for undergraduate and graduate student scholarships in gifted education.

2000 The Friends for Gifted Education Fund was established.

2000 The Friends for Gifted Education Newsletter was initiated.

2001 The Advisory Council for The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies was formed.

2002 The Frances A. Karnes Endowed Chair was established.

2002 A federal grant was awarded to fund a study on the culturally diverse gifted – Expanding Appropriate Assessment and Differentiated Instruction for Culturally Diverse Gifted Students.

2003 A federal grant was awarded to fund a study on the disabled gifted – Appropriate Practices for Screening, Identifying, and Instructing the Gifted Disabled Youth.

2003 An informational video was created depicting all of the activities of the Center.

2004 A federal grant was awarded to fund a study on early childhood giftedness – Appropriate Practices for Screening, Identifying, and Serving Potentially Gifted Preschoolers.

2004 The Economic Impact Study of the Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies was conducted. It was the first such study in the history of gifted education.

2004 The Career Explorations for Girls Conference, an annual event, was established to allow girls the opportunity to meet university and community leaders in various fields.

2005 A federal grant was awarded to fund a study on gifted, at-risk youth – Appropriate Practices for Screening, Identifying, and Serving Gifted At-Risk Youth.

2008 A federal grant was awarded to fund a study on continuous progress curriculum – The Continuous Progress Curriculum Model for Elementary Education.
This book is designed to help guide students in grades three through 10 as they research, organize and present information they have studied independently, or in small groups. Specifically, the program aides students in selecting a topic, organizing their thoughts, asking questions, choosing a useful study method, collecting information, developing a product, presenting information, and evaluating their independent study.

A teacher’s guide, a student booklet, and 112 resource cards are included in the program. The Teacher’s Guide contains 25 lessons plans, assessments, and student examples to assist teachers in guiding students to topics that are most likely to sustain their interest. From there, teachers are given tips and rubrics that encourage high productivity during the course of the study.

The student booklet works directly with the teacher’s guide, and is designed to help students plan and organize their projects. Additionally, the resource cards are designed to be used to help students find new ideas, more information about specific steps, and examples for better understanding.

Classroom teachers are provided with step-by-step instructions for organizing materials and guiding their students through the research process. Featuring teaching tips for students at all levels, the book efficiently instructs what is required for successful classroom management including suggestions, advice, helpful rubrics, checklists, and student rating scales. With sample lesson plans and real-world examples, it can provide the basis for adding an independent study program to elementary school curriculums regardless of the subject to be studied. It is also highly recommended for use by home schooling parents as well.

According to the Random House Unabridged Dictionary (2006), differentiation is the act of perceiving the difference in or between. It is this process used in the classroom that Roberts and Inman so aptly describe in Strategies for Differentiating Instruction. The authors begin by developing an analogy between a dinner party hostess serving a one dish meal to a very diverse group of guests and a teacher in a heterogeneous classroom. This example will immediately ring true to anyone who has experience in today’s classrooms and even more so to those with experience working with gifted students. The analogy, however, is also appropriate for those with little or no experience in these venues as it brings into focus the dilemma facing most teachers in the educational system – How do I meet the academic needs of each of my students and help them reach their potential within the framework of my curriculum? In essence, this book guides the reader to adapt a “one-size-fits-all” curriculum.

Roberts and Inman have compiled easy-to-use, practical strategies that are wholly appropriate for both the gifted classroom or the regular education classroom teacher to put to immediate use. Written in clear language with ample illustrations and figures, the authors address important topics such as creating a classroom climate that supports differentiation, pre-assessing student learning, managing a differentiated classroom, assessing differentiated learning, and how to build consensus and support for differentiation. Roberts and Inman also provide directions and suggestions on how to incorporate actual differentiation techniques and strategies into the classroom curriculum. While discussing content, process and product, they introduce the reader to utilizing Bloom’s Taxonomy, Venn Diagrams, and Think-Tac-Toe as strategies to provide appropriate learning experiences for gifted students in order for them to make continuous progress.

In short, this book is a must read for the teacher who is new to designing appropriate curricular experiences for gifted students. It is sure to whet their appetite as they experience success with these strategies and techniques and desire more tools for their differentiation toolbox. This book also has much to offer the experienced teacher who is looking for the theory and research of best practice in gifted education to support the implementation of differentiation in the classroom.

Reviewed by Stephanie K. Ferguson, Ph.D.
Director, Program for the Exceptionally Gifted (PEG)
at Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, Virginia
BOOKS AND RESOURCES for Program Options

BOOKS


The authors developed these strategies to promote academic achievement for both gifted learners and struggling students. They also provide teachers with tools to create collaborative literacy classrooms where students can generate ideas independently, discuss them and then develop new concepts within a group environment. Collaboration boosts critical thinking skills and helps develop and enrich reading, writing, speaking and thinking experiences.


This book gives school professionals the tools to put students in charge of their own learning. Going beyond traditional “study skills” guides that focus on the mechanics of homework completion and test taking, the authors provide step-by-step guidance and data-based interventions for helping each student develop a repertoire of problem-solving strategies in the areas of motivation, emotional responses to learning, behavior, time management, organization, memory, reading, writing, math and more.


This book offers the advice you need to help your gifted students explore important content and show their learning in creative and innovative ways. From selecting a topic, to using innovative research strategies, to reporting results in an interesting way, these authors tell you how to help your students succeed at independent study.


This book provides a concise and thorough introduction to the various types of out of school programming recommended and appropriate for gifted and advanced learners. This book is a service publication of the National Association for Gifted Children (Washington, D.C.). It has been jointly developed with NAGC and passes the highest standards of scholarship research, and practice.

RESOURCES


This case study investigated the research processes and authentic learning experiences of 10 junior high students as they completed independent research projects in a class for gifted students. Suggestions are made on how to alter the process to make independent research produce more authentic learning experiences.


The authors propose that educators should be capitalizing on the rapidly expanding technological resources available to teachers. They propose a framework to support individualized and independent learning within a network of peers that will provide challenging interactions through extensive use of online learning. Online resources and technologies promote the exploration of new concepts and sharing of new learning with a group of motivated and “like-minded” peers.


This study gives a description of gifted students’ participation in extracurricular activities in and outside of school. Gifted students were more involved in competitions, clubs, or other extracurricular activities in mathematics than in other subject areas and were the least involved in computer science activities. The data reveal some gender-stereotypical tendencies regarding participation in and outside-of-school activities and gender-typical patterns of support from parents. Grade and course differences were also found.


The purpose of the study was to analyze the connection between student choice, the use of independent study, and the connection of social studies with real-world experiences as motivating factors for student achievement in gifted seventh-grade social studies students.


Pugh provides information on various aspects of independent study contracts of the Downingtown Educational Enrichment Program for gifted children in the ninth-grade. Topics covered include the overview and design of developing critical thinking skills, student-generated higher levels of questioning, sequence and content of critical thinking instructions; and the benefits of diverse topics of study.


In this study, three hypotheses were tested: (a) in classes where cooperative learning is used, non-identified children will exhibit more positive attitudes toward cooperative learning methods than their more academically able peers; (b) boys will exhibit more positive attitudes toward cooperative learning than girls; (c) gifted children, in contrast to non-gifted peers, will exhibit more positive attitudes in settings where cooperative learning is seldom or never used in settings where such instruction is frequently used. The authors’ findings were not strong, but overall attitudes toward school subjects were most positive in classes where cooperative learning was used sparingly as an instructional supplement.


The authors suggest using programs based on recommendations from both the fields of curriculum development and gifted education. They discuss approaches to structuring students’ participation in integrative activities, use of comprehensive interdisciplinary studies for gifted students, and interdisciplinary concepts as effective springboards for independent study and programs.
Click on...

THE CENTER’S EXPANDED WEB SITE

Visit the expanded Web site for the Center at www.usm.edu/gifted.
Please offer your ideas on information to be added.

AMAZING SPACE
http://amazing-space.stsci.edu/

Amazing Space has a series of scientific explorations made for classroom use, but available to all Web browsers. Several of the topics explored such as “Comets” and “Planet Impact” have interactive Web applications that engage the student in discovering various aspects of each subject. The Web site also has an extensive glossary of scientific vocabulary words. Amazing Space was the winner of Scientific American’s Science & Technology Web Award, in 2005.

ARTS ON THE WEB
www.zeroland.co.nz

Arts on the Web is a directory of the world’s most authoritative Web sites relating to the arts and humanities: visual arts, performing arts and literature. Topics include art, art history, famous artists and writers, online artworks, art periods, art museums, dance, theater, film, literature, music and more.

BEST OF HISTORY WEB SITES
www.besthistorysites.net

Best of History Web Sites is an award-winning portal that contains annotated links to over 1,000 history Web sites as well as links to hundreds of quality K-12 history lesson plans, history teacher guides, history activities, history games, history quizzes, and more. BOHWS has been recommended by The Chronicle of Higher Education, The National Council for the Social Studies, The British Library Net, The New York Public Library, the BBC, Princeton University, and many others.

CREATING COMICS
www.members.shaw.ca/creatingcomics/index.htm

Creating Comics is a resource source Web site filled with information for comic writers, artists and self-publishers. Here you will find various resources on the Internet for practically every aspect of comic creation, including a reference section to jump start any research required.

ENVIROLINK
www.envirolink.org

The EnviroLink Network is a non-profit organization which has been providing access to thousands of environmental resources since 1991. EnviroLink does not take a position on any specific environmental issues; it exists solely to act as a clearinghouse on the Internet for the environmental community.

FACT MONSTER
www.factmonster.com

Fact Monster is an online almanac, dictionary, encyclopedia and homework reference designed for students needing a one-stop site for all their reference needs. Featuring a sharp graphic interface, Fact Monster clearly categorizes topics ranging from the United States, people, worlds, science, sports, math and money, and other useful and interesting categories. Students will enjoy the games, word quizzes and links that offer an abundance of topical information.

FILM STREET
www.filmstreet.co.uk

Film Street is designed to unlock imaginations, introduce the joys of film and encourage creative expression through filmmaking. “We want to inspire and excite young children to engage with film so that they become the filmmakers and cinema audiences of the future.” The Web site is designed to entertain and engage children and to provide easy routes into film for teaching and enjoyment both in school and at home.

FOREST PUZZLES
www.omsi.edu/visit/life/forestpuzzles/

Forest Puzzles is an educational toolbox to use alone or with the Forest Puzzles exhibit. The Web site is intended for three audiences: students in grades 3-8, teachers and parents. Each group will find a wealth of information and activities about forests and forestry. Educators will find resources for helping students understand the Forest Puzzles site and exhibit, including a glossary, educational objectives and worksheets to use in the exhibit or classroom. The Forest Puzzles Web site has three major areas: Forest Cycles, Forest Management, and Forest Products.

TWO FORKS, IDAHO
www.accessexcellence.org/AE/mspot/twoforks/

“Two Forks, Idaho” is an online science mystery story that challenges readers to discover who is at the bottom of a small-town crime. Combining scientific knowledge, problem-solving skills and an interesting narrative, the story will be engaging to curious students, and will expand their imaginations to consider scientific knowledge as a necessary, worthwhile and interesting field of study. Teachers are encouraged to use this tool in their classroom to facilitate scientific exploration.

ZIGZAGZINE
www.zigzagzine.com/

ZigZagZine is an online publication by and for kids that features student stories, poems and artwork. The zine publishes bi-monthly and has recently featured articles on topics such as the effects of Hurricane Katrina on wetlands, owls in San Francisco, Genghis Khan, elephant seals, tide pooling and the changes being made to the California Academy of Sciences. The zine is available for free, via download, on the ZigZagZine Web site.
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I want to become a Friend for Gifted Education. The funds generated will apply to scholarships for gifted, financially disadvantaged students, and for other notable purposes.

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Over the years, we have lost contact with some of our former program participants. Please help us find them by forwarding their names, addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers. Thanks for helping.

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**JANUARY 17 - FEBRUARY 28, 2009**  
Saturday Gifted Studies Program

**MARCH 6, 2009**  
Spring Day of Sharing for Teachers of the Gifted

**JUNE 14 - 19, 2009**  
Leadership Studies Program

**JUNE 21 - 26, 2009**  
Summer Gifted Studies Program

**JULY 5 - 24, 2009**  
Summer Program for Academically Talented Youth

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We express our continued gratitude to the members of the Advisory Council who have agreed to offer suggestions and support for the advancement of teaching, research, and service initiatives of The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies.

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