

SCOPE

Newsletter of the NAGC Curriculum Studies Network



**Winter
2016**



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From the Editor

Dear SCOPE readers,

Welcome to the Winter 2016 issue of *SCOPE*! It's a busy time of year, but we hope that you might find a moment to catch up on the latest from our Curriculum Studies network and be inspired by other educators! In this issue, Dr. Teresa Johnson, a retired teacher of gifted students reflects on her experiences in writing and implementing curriculum for her students. She reminds us of the powerful influence of high-quality, culturally responsive, student-centered curriculum. Also, in this issue, we highlight the curriculum award winners recognized in the Orlando, Florida NAGC convention.

In 2017 our Network will provide two webinars this year. Be on the lookout for dates for the webinars!

As the new Chair-Elect of the network, I would like to say I'm thrilled to work with Dr. Elissa Brown, the newly elected Chair. I enjoyed meeting many of you at the conference. Please reach out to us if you have ideas or articles that you would like to submit to this newsletter!

-Emily Mofield, Ed.D., NAGC Curriculum Studies Chair-Elect

NAGC Curriculum Network Leadership

Curriculum Chair: Elissa Brown

Convention Program Chair: Leighann Pennington

Chair-Elect/Newsletter Editor: Emily Mofield

Curriculum Award Chairs: Christine Briggs and Carol Ann Williams

From the Network Chair



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*Want to
present at
the
NAGC
Conference
in 2017?
Submit
proposals by
January 20!
www.nagc.org*

Dear Curriculum Studies Network members,

Welcome to our winter edition, post 2016 Orlando NAGC convention! This is my first newsletter as Chair. Our newsletter editor, for now, is my wonderful chair elect, Dr. Emily Mofield. If any of you are ready and willing to be newsletter editor, contact me (eb177@hunter.cuny.edu) or Emily (mofielde@gmail.com) by Jan 15, 2017 ! We plan on providing 2 more newsletters for you in 2017. In this edition, we're proud to share NAGC's new vision and mission, which our network will be supporting through the lens of curriculum! Additionally, we have a lead article from Teresa Johnson about how her middle school students, through authentic problem-based and integrated curriculum units, learned in meaningful and important ways. Her students also won competitions and were involved in supplemental programs, as a result-so learning occurred inside and outside of the school! Lastly, this issue focuses on our 2016 Curriculum Award winners. For more information about the actual units of studies, contact the authors. This spring (2017), our network will host 2 webinars. Additionally, we are working with NAGC to produce a special issue of Teaching for High Potential (THP) on Curriculum! If you would like to contribute to that issue, let me know. Thank you for the opportunity to lead this active, caring, and committed network!

Warmest Regards,
Dr. Elissa F. Brown, Curriculum Studies Network Chair

New Vision and Mission

NAGC has a new updated strategic framework. This was introduced at the 2016 Convention in Orlando.

Vision

Giftedness and high potential are fully recognized, universally valued, and actively nurtured to support children from all backgrounds in reaching for their personal best and contributing to their communities.

Mission

Our mission is to support those who enhance the growth and development of gifted and talented children through education, advocacy, community, building, and research.

Minds

Increase the public's urgency to support the needs of gifted and talented children

Policies

Advocate for the adoption of policies that promote programs and services in which gifted and talented children will thrive.

Practices

Empower supporters to implement effective practices for all gifted and talented children in homes, schools, and communities.

Teaching Gifted Students: An Inspiring and Rewarding Experience

Teresa Johnson

"When you serve passionately and give freely, rewards will come when least expected." This was a frequent quote of my mother, an elementary teacher. As a teacher, I taught middle grade students in a diverse, urban environment for 30 years, and was honored to have spent the last half of my career in gifted education. In this article, I share my experience working with gifted students, and the curriculum design I implemented to serve the students I taught more effectively.

When I was recruited for my school district's gifted program, it was an unexpected blessing! It was my desire to extend learning experiences for advanced students with more depth and complexity. Moreover, I wanted learning experiences to be meaningful, inspirational, and relevant to the students' personal lives. Simply stated, I wanted to give them "something else to take home to think about besides homework."

My third year in the program brought information that transformed my curriculum and instructional approach with gifted students. I had the privilege to meet and work with educator and consultant, Paul Slocumb. Dr. Slocumb's suggestion was learning experiences for gifted students should emphasize teaching them to see larger understandings, incorporate opportunities to develop portfolios of authentically-based original projects, and facilitate product and project opportunities so that a synthesis of larger understandings would be required. He believed such products/projects would provide exposure to skills most likely useful in future grade levels, work, and life.

Dr. Slocumb shared his suggested list of universal concepts and expertise. His suggestion of moving student thinking from concrete to abstract with concepts resonated. Reflection on this information and original learning goals led to an outline of thoughts for an integrated curriculum framework. I started with three components I felt were essential for the students I served:

Differentiation of the curriculum, instruction, and learning environment

21st century skills

Social emotional/relationship skills

As I drafted the framework, I initiated a pilot with middle level gifted students. Scientifically based research from the pilot provided important quantitative and qualitative data that were encouraging and inspirational (Johnson, 2010). Continued implementation post research showed improved academic performance (Bazata, et al., 2012). Moreover, I felt students reached high levels of learning when they began to receive recognition for real-world, problem-based collaborative projects. Noteworthy recognitions included awards from economics competitions sponsored by a university's Students in Free Enterprise organization (SIFE), as well as the National Stock Market Game simulation (SMG), and InvestWrite essay competition sponsored by the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association (SIFMA).



Teresa A. Johnson, Ed.D. is a former educator of the Jackson-Madison County School District in Jackson, Tennessee. Dr. Johnson has been an educator since 1984, and served as general and special education teacher for urban middle level grades for 30 years. Dr. Johnson's doctoral research interests are focused on an integrated curriculum framework for middle school high ability and gifted learners that combines curriculum and instruction, the learning environment, 21st century skills, and social emotional/relationship skills. She is a contributing author to "*From Vision to Action: Best practices to reduce the impact of poverty in communities, education, healthcare, and more.*"

“Students were engaged, motivated, and inspired!”

Students placed first in the SIFE economics competition three consecutive years (2006, 2007, 2008) for creation of small business prospectuses for international markets.

Students placed first regionally in the SIFMA Stock Market Game simulation in 2006, 2009, 2010, and third place regionally in 2011 for their ability to trade stock on the three major stock exchanges that increased an initial \$100,000.00 investment (Stock Market Game, n. d.).

Students placed ninth, second, and third nationally (2009, 2010, and 2013 respectively) and first place in the state (2012) in the SIFMA InvestWrite essay competition for their skill in writing to prompts based on hypothetical investment opportunities.

Equally as encouraging as the awards recognitions, personal interactions with students, written reflections, artifacts and portfolios, mini grants received, and a state curriculum award, led me to conclude the curriculum framework accomplished my original goals—to incorporate more depth and complexity, provide meaningful content, and make learning relevant to students' personal lives. Additionally, based on personal observation and written reflections, students were engaged, motivated, and inspired.

I believe this framework would be appropriate in gifted or general education settings. Consider the following learning experience that would coincide with Social Studies and/or Language Arts: *Conflict* could be used to show how differences can be a prerequisite for conflict, and to demonstrate how the resolution of differences can lead to change. Selected and/or created classroom materials and assignments would emphasize this concept. A culminating real-world project may include a forum where students and stakeholders discuss and exchange ideas for resolution of differences related to issues impacting the school and community.

Throughout the implementation of the framework, I composed many sets of curricula based on various universal concepts, employed alternative instructional strategies, and exposed students to 21st century skills. I also incorporated a list of guiding principles I felt enhanced the framework and infused aspects of multiculturalism and diversity:

Foster relationships with students. Number one! Know students inside and outside of class. Attend events. Conduct home visits and calls. See students as individuals. Embrace their identity.

Develop a curriculum that differentiates content, process, product, and is attentive to affective needs.

Take careful thought to create and develop curriculum lessons, units, and materials that infuse and provide exposure to:

universal concepts and/or larger understandings

authentically-based, real-world original projects and problem solving

subject/topic relevancy to students' lives

learning styles, strengths, multiple intelligences, and interests, and product and project opportunities where a synthesis of larger understandings is required.

Reflection, modification, and adaptation in curriculum planning and instruction are germane to effectiveness.

Move beyond multicultural moments. Try to incorporate multicultural content throughout the year so all cultures are recognized and valued (EdChange, n. d., p. 1).

Teachers should develop knowledge, skills, beliefs, and values that allow them to teach well, and strategies that allow them to teach in any context with various groups of students with a range of student needs, interests, and skills in mind (Ford & Milner, 2005).

Teachers should be culturally aware, culturally knowledgeable, and culturally competent (Ford & Milner, 2005).

Create a culturally responsive classroom environment that incorporates collaborative learning, a variety of culturally diverse resources and materials, and student-centered bulletin boards.

Teach interactively so everyone is engaged and comprehends. Provide frequent feedback.

Complete projects and assignments along with students (motivational and inspirational).

Teachers teach to share knowledge and help students reach their highest potential. If students become motivated, engaged, and inspired as they learn, the teacher, in my opinion, reaches the highest pinnacle in teaching--a rewarding experience. This is one suggested approach of many. As educators, we must strive to meet the needs of the students we serve by remaining on a constant, impassioned search to challenge, inspire, and give students "something else to take home to think about besides homework."

"Move beyond multicultural moments. Try to incorporate multicultural content throughout the year so all cultures are recognized and valued."

References

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Congratulations NAGC Curriculum Studies Network Award Winners 2016

Are you interested in being a reviewer for curriculum awards? Please contact Christine Briggs if you are interested!

cbriggs@louisiana.edu

Congratulations to the winners of the 2016 Curriculum Awards! Submitted units must meet expectations outlined on the NAGC Curriculum Awards Rubric. These elements include differentiation, opportunities for talent development, clarity and nature of objectives, evaluation components, learning activities, instructional strategies, resources and level of student engagement with materials, alignment of curriculum components, evidence of effectiveness, and ease and use by other educators. A variety of subjects, grade levels, and types of classrooms were represented this year! Consider the amazing possibilities of what happens when students interact with such high-quality curriculum!

Pictured left to right: Jason McIntosh, Tamra Stambaugh, Emily Mofield, Tracy Missett, Sara Townsend, Shelagh Gallgher, and Jean Gubbins.



Aristotle's Rhetoric

Target Grade Level: 4-8, Gifted Classroom

Authors: Tracy Missett, Carolyn Callahan, Amy Azano

Available through Prufrock Press (*Research and Rhetoric: Language Arts Unit for gifted students in Grade 5*)

Aristotle's Rhetoric: Learning the Art of Persuasion is designed to help students develop the ability to persuade others while expanding their writing, reading, listening, and oral advocacy skills. Aristotle described rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion," referring to the way a speaker uses specific appeals to an audience in order to persuade its members to do or believe something. The use of appeals, including ethos, pathos and logos, by contemporary advocates is essential to persuading an audience both orally and in writing. Thus, the title of the unit reflects one of the big ideas of rhetoric: Rhetoric is an art than can be studied systematically.

Fit to Print

Target Grade Level: 4th –8th Grade, Gifted Classroom

Authors: Shelagh Gallagher, Dana Plowden, Sara Townsend

Available through Royal Fireworks Press

Fit to Print places students in the role of foreign desk editors of the *New York Times*. They work with several stories that preceded the Spanish-American War, including the death—or murder—of the American dentist Ricardo Ruiz, the incarceration and rescue of the teenage revolutionary Evangelina Cisneros, and the scandal that led to the resignation of the Spanish Ambassador to America. Throughout, students manage a diverse array of information, sometimes presented in Spanish, and sort through complex international relationships. They also receive articles published by the histrionic, but popular, competition—William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*, as they contend with the question "What constitutes responsible journalism?"

Geometry and Measurement for All Shapes and Sizes

Target Grade Level: PreK-3rd, Heterogeneous Classroom

Authors: Shelbi Cole, Nancy Heilbronner, E. Jean Gubbins, Jeffrey Corbishley, Jennifer Savino, and Rachel McAnallen

Content differentiation, enrichment, and acceleration are the foci of the *Geometry & Measurement for All Shapes & Sizes* unit (Cole et al., 2010) developed by The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented research team. These strategies occur within and across lessons with specific modifications and differentiation for high ability or gifted learners and scaffolding or tiering for all students in academically diverse classrooms. This curriculum unit tailors content, process, and products to these students by emphasizing conceptual thinking, real-world disciplinary inquiry, and problem solving; assessing learning needs of students; helping students develop increasing levels of expertise; and encouraging student involvement with problem solving and product development and real-world utility.

Award-winning Curriculum includes opportunities for students to engage in activities aligned with student interests or strengths, explore advanced content within the field, acquire skills of the professional discipline, investigate real-world problems, and develop authentic products.

I, Me, You, We: Individuality vs. Conformity: ELA Lessons for Gifted and Advanced Learners

Target Grade Level: 4th –8th, Gifted Classroom

Authors: Emily Mofield, Tamra Stambaugh, & Vanderbilt PTY

Available through Prufrock Press

In *I, Me, You, We: Individuality vs. Conformity* students explore essential questions such as “How does our environment shape our identity? What are the consequences of conforming to a group? When does social conformity go too far?” Designed specifically for gifted students and developed by Vanderbilt Programs for Talented Youth, this unit incorporates accelerated Common Core State Standards and provides opportunities for students to interact with advanced materials and resources in complex ways. Students examine the fine line of individuality vs. conformity through the related concepts of belongingness, community, civil disobedience, self-reliance, and questioning the status quo by engaging in creative activities, Socratic Seminars, literary analyses, and debates. Lessons include differentiated learning tasks and products and also incorporate features of depth, complexity, challenge and abstractness while prompting students to reflect on the concept of individuality and conformity as it relates to their personal lives and messages from authors, orators, artists, and songwriters.

Quests and Quandaries: Exploring Intellectual Interests in Depth

Target Grade Level: 4th-8th grade, Gifted Classroom

Author: Jason McIntosh

Will be available through Royal Fireworks Press

The *Quests and Quandaries: Exploring Intellectual Interests in Depth* unit includes nine weeks of lesson plans designed to meet the needs of gifted students in grades 4-12. The two overarching goals of the unit are to: (a) facilitate for students the process of discovering and exploring intellectual interests in depth using Kaplan’s (2009) depth and complexity model as a framework; and (b) to introduce various problem-solving strategies and provide opportunities for students to engage in problem solving using the problem-based learning method as described by Gallagher (2009). At the end of the ninth week, students will have completed 10 hours of research on their topics in class and 12 hours creating an authentic product to demonstrate what they have learned. Standards embedded in the unit include components of the National Common Core Standards for Language Arts and the National Association for Gifted Children’s Learning and Development Standard.