From the Editor

Dear SCOPE readers,

Welcome to our special post-convention issue of SCOPE! If you attended the convention in Baltimore, I hope you found it as exciting and as informative as I did. For those of you who couldn’t make it this year, we hope you can join us next year in Phoenix.

In this issue, we recognize the winners of this year’s curriculum awards. We also encourage you to consider submitting your own units for next year’s competition. The Curriculum Studies website is a great resource for details about previous award winning curriculum units as well as information about writing and submitting your own unit (nagccurriculumnetwork.weebly.com).

Also in this issue, our network chair, Leighann Pennington, shares some helpful information about submitting your convention proposals for next year.

~Matthew Reames, Newsletter Editor

NAGC Curriculum Network Leadership

Curriculum Chair: Leighann Pennington
Chair-Elect: Denise Drain
Convention Program Chairs: Christine Briggs and Carol Ann Williams
Newsletter Editor: Matthew Reames
Dear Members,

In this edition, we provide a follow-up to the recent NAGC Conference in Baltimore. If you attended, I hope you feel invigorated and renewed in your mission to serve gifted learners. If you presented at the conference, please consider turning your presentation into an article for the SCOPE newsletter. For those of us who could not attend this year, you will still find interesting resources in this edition. We are sharing information about the latest NAGC publications and the Curriculum Award winners. If you have ever thought about entering a curriculum unit into the awards, start revising a unit now, little by little, and you will be ready for the deadline in June. For the future, keep in mind that we are looking for reviewers to rate the Curriculum Studies proposals for next year's conference. Just send me an email indicating your interest in reviewing: Leighann.Pennington@gmail.com. The reviewing process will take place after proposals are due, typically in February. If you are interested in submitting a proposal to the conference next year, check out my article which includes some helpful tips for you.

Enjoy the holiday season!

Sincerely,
Leighann Pennington, Chair

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**Curriculum Award Winners**

Congratulations to this year’s winners of the curriculum studies awards!

**Moving through Dimensions: A mathematics unit for high ability learners in grades 6-8**

*Gifted Education Program Grades 4th - 8th
Authors: Dana Johnson and Kimberly Chandler, Center for Gifted Education, College of William and Mary*

In this unit, students are invited to stretch their knowledge as they engage in this geometry unit. This award-winning unit features a well-documented alignment between goals, assessment, and instruction. The lessons throughout the unit are easy to understand and facilitate. There are notes to the teacher that provide greater detail for instruction and student support; the unit also includes a helpful glossary to support academic vocabulary. Student reflections provide data for teacher to use for future instruction.
The Case of the Dean Tomato Plants: Exploring Photosynthesis and Respiration Cycles

Gifted Education Program Grades 4th-8th
Authors: Nicole Cruz and Tamra Stambaugh

The content in the unit is complex, allowing for many solutions rather than one answer. The unit includes an interesting and engaging simulation where students need to act as scientists and then present their findings through a role as expert witness in a legal action. The authors do an excellent job of creating opportunities for hands-on learning throughout the unit. Excellent high level questioning is present throughout the unit.

The unit is aligned to both CCSS and state science standards and content, process, product goals are clearly laid out. The unit is user-friendly as icons guide teachers through questions tied to each objective.

Visit Our Website for More Award-Winning Units

The Curriculum Studies website has information about past award winners as well as details on how to prepare your own units for this year’s competition! Visit us at nagccurriculumnetwork.weebly.com.

Thank You for a Great Convention!

Thanks to everyone who helped with this year’s NAGC convention! Our network is the largest network in NAGC and we couldn’t do it without you! Be sure to look for ways you can get involved by submitting proposals for next year’s convention and by submitting units for the Curriculum Studies Awards. Additionally, we welcome articles from our members - email the newsletter editor, Matthew Reames at mreames@gmail.com for more information.

Start Planning Now for the 2015 Convention!

It’s not too early to start thinking about next year’s convention! We are looking forward to seeing you next November 13—15 in Phoenix, Arizona!
Tips for Writing and Submitting Your Own Conference Presentation Proposal
By Leighann Pennington, M.Ed.

Each year, the Curriculum Studies Network welcomes your proposals for the National Association for Gifted Children annual conference. Teachers, administrators, gifted coordinators, researchers and more—we hope that all of you would be willing to share your ideas related to curriculum and instruction with audiences at the conference. Presenting at the conference is a rewarding and inspiring experience. You will likely return to your school feeling invigorated by the thoughtful and appreciative audience at NAGC.

We want your proposal to be the best it can be, so that it will receive full consideration by reviewers, and hopefully be selected as a concurrent session, roundtable, or poster session. All are equally rewarding ways to get out there and share your ideas with your fellow NAGC conference attendees. Overall, this article will share advice about how to make your proposal the best it can be.

Each proposal will be submitted online; a proposal requires a 100-word abstract and 250 word description, which allows you to add a bit more detail. An individual can submit two proposals, but only one proposal per network, or you can submit with a co-presenter. For further details, consult the NAGC website at nagc.org. Proposals are due by February 9, 2015.

What Happens Next?

Once you submit your proposal, reviewers will use a rubric to evaluate the proposal. As a potential presenter, what can you do to ensure that your proposal will be excellent and meet the criteria for an outstanding presentations selected for the annual conference?

What is the first thing reviewers will do when they read your proposal? They will ask: Is this presentation relevant to the Curriculum Studies Network? Therefore, you should familiarize yourself with the mission statement of the Curriculum Studies Network:

The Curriculum Studies Network believes that work in the area of curriculum forms the core basis for programs for gifted learners and thus must be carried out in a thoughtful, comprehensive, and articulated way. Furthermore, we believe that curriculum for the gifted should be organized to allow gifted learners to move at their own rates, to provide in-depth experiences, to offer exposure to new knowledge areas, and to make interdisciplinary connections. Specifically, the Network undertakes projects and activities that: 1) develop standards for curriculum development processes including evaluation, scope, and sequence; 2) develop a working relationship and mutual projects with other national curriculum groups; 3)
provide a clearinghouse of appropriate curriculum materials for gifted students; and 4) promote research and development in curriculum for gifted students.

Reviewers will keep the mission statement in mind as they read proposals. If your proposal is not a good fit for Curriculum Studies, consider which other Networks might be a good fit, depending on your topic. For example, as a middle school teacher, I have submitted proposals to the Middle Grades Network. Curriculum Studies receives a large number of proposals, and we cannot accept them all. Consider other networks as options for your proposal.

Reviewers will analyze proposals based on the following criteria:

- Curricular and instructional strategies that are a direct response to the learning needs of gifted learners
- Issues in curriculum and instruction for gifted learners
- Research that informs appropriate curriculum and instruction for gifted learners
- Connections between best practices in gifted education and general education as they relate to gifted learners

Preference will be given to proposals that are:

- Clearly written
- Defensible based on current best practices
- Important to the field
- Appropriately targeted to a specific audience

What are a few simple and easy things you can do to enhance your proposal?

These simple steps can help you improve:

1. Open up last year’s conference program or the NAGC website. Read the 100 word abstracts for Curriculum Studies presentations that were accepted. You can learn from these strong examples about how to improve your writing. You could use these models to craft your writing style. Try to be concise and use active verbs. You may need to rewrite your abstract more than once to get it just right.

2. Be sure to describe the interactive elements you will include in your presentation, so that your proposal will stand out from the crowd; you will have space for this in your 250 word description. If you have a specific audience that will benefit from your interactive presentation, be sure to clearly state your audience and tell why and how they’d benefit.

3. Clearly identify what your participants will leave the session with, in the form of skills, ideas, instructional strategies, lesson plans, or other resources. Sometimes I think about KUDs; what will participants know,
understand, and be able to do as a result of my presentation? What will they bring back to their classrooms that they will be able to use next Monday?

4. Ask one or two colleagues to read your proposal. They can give advice on how to make your writing more succinct or how you can present your ideas clearly to an audience that may be unfamiliar with your project, unit, lesson, or research.

5. Have you done your homework? Include the research base that supports the main ideas in your presentation. Make sure you are up to date on the latest “best practices” or cutting-edge research in the field, including books and articles. To save words, I often list author names at the end of my 250 word proposal description. For example, in my proposal for a presentation about differentiation and motivation, I wrote-- Research Base: Tomlinson, Eccles, Dweck, Sternberg.

6. Become familiar with the theme for next year’s conference, in Phoenix. How can your presentation highlight or tie into this theme in some way? If it does relate to the theme, make it clear how, but if it is a stretch to relate your idea to the conference theme, that’s okay too. Useful, thoughtful, well-researched proposals will be honored and appreciated, whether or not they relate to this year’s conference theme.

**Don’ts**

- Don’t include your name or identifying information about yourself with the 100 word abstract or 250 word description.

- Don’t submit a proposal to Curriculum Studies that does not relate to curriculum and instruction best practices for gifted students. Our network is NAGC’s largest and receives hundreds of proposals; it can be very competitive for your proposal to be accepted as a Curriculum Studies Network presentation.

- Don’t wait until the last minute. Start jotting down your ideas now. When the call for proposals comes out, then you can craft an engaging proposal, and still have time to polish your writing and ask a colleague to read your proposal, all before the deadline!

**In Conclusion**

Sometimes, the most helpful advice is an example. On the next page, you can read my presentation abstract and description. I hope you found this advice helpful and that you will submit a proposal (or two) to NAGC!
Example: Improving Your Differentiated Instruction: Insights from Motivation Research

Short Description (100 word abstract)

Differentiated instruction advocates giving students choice, acknowledging their interests, and challenging them in their zone of optimal academic development. This session includes a primer on the motivation research from educational psychology that will give teachers insight into how differentiated instructional methods will motivate students to become learners who engage deeply in learning content and skills, while enjoying and valuing the discipline. This session brings together Tomlinson’s work on differentiated instruction with motivation research by Dweck, Eccles, and other motivation experts. A former middle school teacher/gifted educator/education researcher will share lesson plans and user-friendly content on research and instructional methods.

Extended Description (This example is 240 words, but it can be up to 250 words.)

Differentiated instruction advocates giving students choice, acknowledging their interests, and challenging them in their zone of optimal academic development. This session includes a primer on the motivation research from educational psychology that will give teachers insight into how differentiated instructional methods will motivate students to become learners who engage deeply in learning content and skills, while enjoying and valuing the discipline. This session brings together Tomlinson’s work on differentiated instruction with motivation research by Dweck, Eccles, and other motivation experts. The session will begin with non-negotiables of differentiated instruction. Then I will discuss the research on interest and choice within the motivation research in the field of educational psychology which supports differentiated instructional concepts.

The session will also include “Motivation Research 101,” including the main ideas of mastery vs. performance goals, fixed vs. growth mindset, expectancy-value theory, and self-theories. Without taking the time in busy gifted educators’ schedule to read all of these academic articles, participants will learn the main ideas in this research field, so they can apply it to their practice and the way they teach and advocate for differentiated instruction.

Participants will leave the session refreshed on the main ideas of differentiated instruction, sample differentiated lessons that supply students with challenge, interest, and choice, and a way to talk to students, parents, and administrators about how their instructional methods unite good teaching and learning with insights from motivation research. Research Base: Tomlinson, Imbeau, Erickson, Dweck, Eccles, Conley

The short description is what will go in the conference program.

Reviewers use the two descriptions to make their decisions about which proposals to accept.
New NAGC Select E-books

NAGC Select e-books are a series of concise, informative booklets on topics and issues in education. Intended as a service to practicing educators and/or families, they are designed for the non-researcher who needs to know the basics of a particular topic in education. The books have a consistent format: an intro on the importance of the topic, three to five sections explaining what we know and how it translates into practice, a conclusion/summary and five to seven key resources on the topic, with annotations.

Several new publications from the NAGC Select series were featured at this year’s convention. All of these books as well as many more can be purchased from Amazon.com as both e-books and print-on-demand books. Clicking on the book title will take you to the Amazon.com page.

Rigor for Gifted Learners: Modifying Curriculum with Intellectual Integrity
By Bertie Kingore

Many educators differentiate less for gifted students than for struggling students. The intensity of today’s standards may increase that disparity unless teachers access practical research- and evidence-based strategies to promote differentiation for gifted and potentially gifted students while implementing standards with intellectual integrity. This book explains the continuous learning needs of high-ability learners and offers research-based, high-yield instructional strategies, curricular modifications, assessments, and social-emotional interventions that effectively enhance gifted students’ success.

Psychological Foundations of the Arts: Understanding and Encouraging Artistic Expression in the Early Grades
By Erin Morris Miller and Rachael Sloan

This book provides an introduction for classroom teachers to the psychological study of the arts including how they can use this knowledge in their classroom. Sections on what psychologists currently know about the biology, cognition, development, and personality of artistic creators are followed by suggested applications for the classroom.
The Social and Emotional Characteristics of Gifted Students  
By Tracy Missett

Through a series of illustrative vignettes, this NAGC Select book presents readers with research showing the overall picture of positive social and emotional health for many gifted students in terms of self-perceptions, motivation, supportive relationships, and resiliency, and how high intelligence may protect against emotional challenges. This book also addresses the social and emotional characteristics of gifted students who experience social and emotional difficulties, and some factors (e.g., asynchronous development, the gifted label, poor curriculum and instruction, bullying) that contribute to poor psychosocial health. Finally, the book provides resources to parents and educators regarding curricula and instructional strategies that support the social and emotional health of gifted students.

Early Entrance to College as an Option for Highly Gifted Adolescents  
by Alexander Pagnani

Over the past few decades a growing number of gifted students have elected to leave high school and enter college early. Research has consistently shown that these students typically go on to perform exceptionally well. This book discusses the history of collegiate early entrance, the myths and facts that surround the practice, a description of modern early entrance programs, and some questions to consider if you or someone you know is considering early entrance.