

RENZULLI CENTER NEWS

Upcoming Events

Free SEM Course— New Session Begins April 5th!

Just for you—a free on-line course that provides an in-depth, comprehensive overview of the [Schoolwide Enrichment Model \(SEM\)](#). This overview provides the resources and the support that you need to implement the SEM now or into next school year, whether that be “in class,” remotely, or a combination of both. It will help you stimulate your students’ interests and provide opportunities for them to express themselves in ways they will enjoy and allow them to achieve at high levels.

In addition, this on-line overview of the SEM includes resources you can share with colleagues. Please use it to help with your implementation of the SEM, either on your own or to introduce SEM at an on-line staff or department meeting. The SEM on-line class includes seven easy-to-follow modules, and teachers who finish it earn a certificate of completion on the SEM.

- ⦿ Module 1: Overview of The Schoolwide Enrichment Model
- ⦿ Module 2: Comprehensive Strength-Based Activities
- ⦿ Module 3: The Enrichment Triad Model
- ⦿ Module 4: Curriculum Compacting
- ⦿ Module 5: Enrichment Clusters
- ⦿ Module 6: Enrichment Infusion
- ⦿ Module 7: Renzulli Learning

We hope that you can join us for this on-line free overview of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model. Please stay healthy and well and know that we are thinking of you during this challenging time in our schools and country.

For more information and to register visit: [Free SEM Class | Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development](#)



Webinar: Perfectionism and Productive Struggle

Presenter: Catherine Little
April 15th, 8 p.m. EDT

Many students live with a burden of perfectionism and the anxieties that often accompany it. Perfectionism may seem even more noticeable in students who tend to be high achievers in school, especially when they begin to encounter learning experiences that present them with more challenge than they have experienced before. In this session, we'll talk about some of the types and signs of perfectionism, as well as how to help students frame academic challenges productively.

To register for this free event visit [Events from the Center | Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development](#)

Upcoming Event: Avoiding Fluff in Differentiation

Presenter: Catherine Little
April 17th, 11 a.m. EDT

Differentiation of curriculum and instruction to ensure rigor and challenge is an essential component of providing support for advanced learners. Yet there is an enormous range of quality in the resources advertised as examples of differentiation. Sometimes the effort to apply a differentiation strategy in an engaging way may lead us to lose sight of the central goals and content of a learning experience, such that the “fluff” takes precedence over the essential learning. Sometimes the surface appearance of an activity may seem engaging, yet it may not provide an authentic challenge or promote high levels of learning and growth. In these circumstances, well-intentioned efforts to make learning activities appealing to students with different interests and abilities become more about appearance and less about substance. In this session, let's talk about what makes a differentiated activity an example of fluff or substance. The discussion includes a focus on constructing and applying key criteria to evaluate resources for aspects of quality differentiation.

To register for this free event visit [Events from the Center | Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development](#)



Special Category

Enrichment Clusters in a Virtual World

*Leigh Shaw,
Mineola UFSD, NY*

No summer camps, a springtime stuck in quarantine, and a persistent worry about a lackluster learning experience impacting schools as the current reality...What to do? How can I remind children and educators that learning in any form is colorful, vibrant, and creative? It felt as if the remote learning, even with the best staff and intentions, had the potential to suck the life out of learning. In a dusty part of my brain, packed away with my depth of gifted research and Confratute experiences—Enrichment Clusters was calling out to me. As the cogs turned and fingers hit keys, it became obvious. The reason enrichment clusters were challenging to implement successfully in my previous efforts was usually the lack of teacher expertise, understanding of enrichment among the powers that be, and an inability to squeeze it into an already packed school day. However, the unfortunate reality of the pandemic provided what enrichment clusters needed: learners eager to have fun, parents lacking places to find it, extraordinary teachers with extra time on their hands, and me—an administrator with an intense passion for enrichment and ulterior motive—to expose more educators to the world of enrichment and prove it is truly for ALL.

After talking with my assistant superintendent about the idea and budget needed, we got to work. An email was sent out to the PreK-12 district asking for teacher interest. If you could teach anything—what would it be? I created a professional development resource for those interested to share the vision, including a planning template and exemplar, and accompanying technology in the form of a digital pathway. Teachers were asked to propose a topic. Twelve teachers were selected, and their awesome clusters are listed below. Each cluster was designed and facilitated for four weeks of two 30-minute live virtual sessions each week. Each was accompanied by a complementary asynchronous online pathway in which students tackled challenges, submitted work, and earned online badges. Parents eagerly enrolled their children via Google Forms and we began the journey with a crew of 340 virtual learners, aged 4 through 14. Parent and student feedback included a 98% overall satisfaction rate.

In its subsequent fall and winter iterations, with the support of an enrichment convert, our Director of ENL, an addition to the vision was proposed—What if we do them all in Spanish? Could that help our ELLs? Just this fall we delivered enrichment to 200 multilanguage learners exploring topics in virtual clusters—all in Spanish! Our spring menu is coming out soon...stay tuned!

Cluster Offerings and Resources

Summer Cluster Offerings for 340 learners:

Summer K-2: Mission: Save the Animals, Under the Sea, The Science of Ice Cream, The Wizarding World of Mineola

Summer 3-4: The Ancient Art of Storytelling, Design the School of the Future, Tinkering with 3D Design and Summer Printing, The Creative Wellness Lab, The Gaming Guild, The Wizarding World of Mineola

Summer 5-7(8): The Art of Silent Communication, Rise Up! Hamilton and Early America, The History of Engineering and Rockets, The Gaming Guild

Fall/Winter Spanish Cluster Offerings for 200 dual language learners:

Spanish K-2: Superhero School! (Escuela de superhéroe), Jungle Safari (Safari en la selva)

Spanish 3-4: Celebrating Latinx Culture Around the World (Celebración de las culturas latinxs del mundo) , Latinx Dance and Music (Danza y música latinx)

Spanish 5-7: Myths and Legends Around the World (Mitos y leyendas alrededor del mundo), The Mysteries of the Ocean (Los misterios del océano)

[Planning Template Exemplar](#) [Word Document]

[Summer Enrichment Clusters Poster](#) [PDF Document]

[Spanish Enrichment Cluster Poster](#) [PDF Document]

For more information, contact: Leigh Shaw at Mrs.LeighShaw@gmail.com

Planting Seeds of Inspiration: SEM in Granby, CT

Shirley Cowles, Enrichment Coach & Teacher

In reflecting back over the past three years, I'm reminded of how difficult it is to develop and sustain a schoolwide model during "normal" times, not to mention a pandemic year. The first two years of program implementation of our Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) were immersed with cultivating and infusing enjoyment, engagement, and enthusiasm for learning into our school community. During this time, our students, teachers, and staff had the opportunity to learn about and explore components of the SEM and experience professional development around the philosophy of enrichment teaching, thinking, and learning. Students, both identified and recommended, participated in designated Enrichment classes, and all students schoolwide participated in two sessions of Enrichment clusters, with emergent student leaders facilitating clusters of interest. In addition, community partnerships were established with numerous practicing professionals from a variety of disciplines visiting our school. *"I really loved being able to speak to a professional photographer and herpetologist - it was a wonderful experience."* ~Will Sleavin/Grade 7

With full exposure to the pandemic, and year three on the horizon, our ability to adapt, redesign, and rethink was tested. This shift provided us with an opportunity to strengthen our classroom options for Enrichment students, testing our own capacity to be creative, think critically, and problem solve. Enrichment classes expanded in scope and sequence which provided students with the opportunity to explore and investigate, while identifying interest areas to research, study, question, and produce a final product around their new-found knowledge. *"I most enjoyed being able to dive deeper into the topic of one of the things I am very interested in—animals."* ~Ava Santa/Grade 8

Enrichment student accolades over three years have included state recognition with *Future Problem Solving of CT*, DAR American History Essay, *CT Student Writers Magazine*, *Letters About Literature*, and the Nutmeg Book Award Selection Committee. Our students are now on their way to becoming perennial life-long learners, working through risk taking, fixing mistakes, and understanding there is joy to be rooted in the learning process. *"I loved the freedom to explore what I wanted to learn."*
~Isabella Bodman/Grade 8

For more information, contact: Shirley Cowles at cowless@granbyschools.org

New Articles from Joe

Joe has recently published two new articles in which you may have an interest. Please feel free to share them with other potentially interested persons in your social media networks.

<https://gifted.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/961/2021/03/Adaptability.pdf>

<https://gifted.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/961/2021/03/Assessment-for-Learning.pdf>

RE Enjoyment
Engagement
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for Learning
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