

Renzulli Learning: Helping Teachers to Provide Enriched, Differentiated Learning for All Students

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Renzulli Learning is an exciting, interactive online program that matches student interests, expression styles and learning styles with a vast array of educational activities and resources, designed to enrich gifted and high potential students' learning process. Using Renzulli Learning, students can explore, discover, learn and create using the most current technology resources independently and in a safe environment. Renzulli Learning consists of six major components:

- **The Renzulli Profiler:** an interactive assessment tool, that identifies students' talents, strengths, interests, and preferred learning and expression styles providing a comprehensive student learning profile.
- **The Renzulli Enrichment Database:** an information warehouse containing over 11,000 carefully screened, grade-level appropriate, child-safe enrichment opportunities, which are regularly monitored, updated, enhanced and expanding at a rate of over 500 per month.
- **The Renzulli Enrichment Resource Search Engine:** a specialized data search facility, used to match individualized student profiles to the most appropriate enrichment activities from our database for each child.
- **The Renzulli Talent Portfolio:** a complete record of the student's on-line learning activities and academic progress.
- **The Wizard Project Maker:** an on-line project tool that helps students to create their own high interest projects and store them in their own Talent Portfolio.
- **The Renzulli Reports:** a series of management tools for teachers, administrators and parents, designed to help follow individual students' learning progression, analyze group usage patterns, and formulate lesson plans and classroom organization.

Collectively, these components provide both students and teachers with unique educational experiences, directly suited to his or her unique learning profile, while simultaneously giving parents insights about their child's enrichment needs. Renzulli Learning also helps teachers get to know their students and meet their diverse needs.

Renzulli Learning System

The Renzulli Learning System (RLS) is based on The Enrichment Triad Model developed by Dr. Joseph Renzulli (1978). It represents over 30 years of research conducted by Dr. Renzulli and Dr. Sally Reis (Renzulli & Reis, 1994) of the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education, and has been cited as the most widely used plan for enrichment and talent development in the world. Their work demonstrates that students achieve at higher levels when they pursue topics and activities of personal interest, and that the enrichment can be provided to all students through the use of this system. In its original paper-based format, this product has been field tested and perfected for over twenty years in approximately 5000 classrooms.

The RLS helps teachers meet the diverse needs of all students through differentiated content and instruction. Differentiation is a process to address the variation of learners in the classroom through multiple approaches that modify instruction and curriculum to meet the individual needs of students. The Renzulli Learning System helps teachers access a wealth of opportunities to provide appropriate differentiation activities for students of all levels of achievement and abilities – and do so in minimal time.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the RLS is its emphasis on a student's strengths. Many adjunct educational programs focus on finding and correcting weaknesses and liabilities. The RLS celebrates and builds upon students' strengths, abilities, and interests.

The Profiler

The RLS Profiler is a computerized assessment tool, which creates a unique profile for each student. It consists of carefully selected, user-friendly, research-based questions related to a student's particular interests. The system assesses students' **interests**: everything from athletics to zoology, whatever excites and inspires the student. The Profiler groups interests into thirteen major categories, including: Performing Arts, Writing and Journalism, Mathematics, History, Fine Arts, Sciences, Athletics and Sports, Photography/Video, Social Action, Business, Technology, Literature/Reading, and Foreign Language.

It also assesses students' Expression Styles, whether they are writing, oral debates, stage performance, sculpture, dance, or a host of other expressive techniques, the student shares how he or she most enjoys interacting with the world. The Profiler considers ten specific expression styles: Written, Oral, Hands-on, Artistic, Audio-Visual/Display, Dramatic, Service, Technological, Musical, and Commercial.

Learning Styles, the ways students like to learn new information, are also assessed in Renzulli Learning and these range from individualized study to large group engagements, paper-based review to digital technology. The Profiler focuses on nine learning styles: Lecture, Programmed Instruction, Discussion, Peer Tutoring, Group Work, Learning Games, Technology, Simulations, and Independent Studies. Students' **Abilities** are also measured using Renzulli Learning, in which a self-evaluation is completed of all students' performance in mathematics, reading, science, and social studies.

Students answer these questions in 30-50 minutes, and the Profiler produces an accurate, printable assessment of each student's interests, abilities, and how that individual best learns. Even better, the Renzulli Profiler reflects the world of learning from the *students'* perspective, not necessarily that of their parents or teachers. This makes it possible to provide enrichment based on the Enrichment Triad Model with optimum effectiveness and efficiency. By representing the student's view, the Profiler assessment becomes a major productivity tool for teachers—placing them literally months ahead in their efforts to understand each child's learning style(s), and to be able to respond to and incorporate those styles as part of an effective learning plan.

The Enrichment Database

The RLS Enrichment Database provides teachers with a vast storehouse of approximately 50,000 differentiated enrichment materials and resources for students with varying ability levels,

interests, learning styles, and preferred styles of expression. In order to truly individualize and differentiate for students of various needs, teachers using the RLS have easy access to an unlimited supply of enrichment activities and resources that make such differentiation possible.

The enrichment database content is organized into fourteen separate categories, representing a wide range of educational activities. They include: Virtual Field Trips, Real Field Trips, Creativity Training Activities, Training in Critical Thinking, Independent Study Options, Contests and Competitions, Websites Based on Personalized Interests, High Interest Fiction Books, High Interest Non-Fiction Books, How-To Books for Conducting Research and Creative Projects, Summer Program Options in Special Talent Areas, On-Line Activities and Research Skills, Research Skills, Videos and DVDs.

All enrichment database entries are carefully researched by Renzulli Learning educational specialists, screened for grade-level applicability, and encoded to reflect one of more of the 14 enrichment categories. Elements of each activity category are then selected automatically by the Renzulli Enrichment Resource Search Engine, providing each student with a unique personalized selection of enrichment opportunities.

The Enrichment Search Engine

The RLS Enrichment Resource Search Engine includes three specialized database search options, each geared to a specific application. The search automatically links each student's Profile (interests, learning styles and product styles) with the Enrichment Database to generate a custom list of activities designed to appeal to that student's grade level, interests, and abilities, as well as his or her learning and expression styles. A secondary self-directed search enables students and teachers to enter set of one or more self-selected keywords in order to locate specific database entries interests, learning styles and expression styles within their individual activity list. This feature is particularly useful for selecting a particular topic for project work or for in-depth study.

A global search capability enables students and teachers to access the entire Enrichment Database, across all interests, expression styles, learning styles, or even grade levels. This permits students with above-grade capabilities to locate and pursue new activities and threads of interest, all within the safety of a pre-screened information environment. It also helps teachers research possible projects and other curriculum enhancements within the same space their students explore. The RLS combined search facilities offer children an extensive, expanding menu of learning opportunities, and offer teachers a new and valuable resource for their classroom preparation.

The Talent Portfolio

The RLS Talent Portfolio includes of a series of open-ended student responses and recordings related to their thought processes, learning projects, and products. The Talent Portfolio includes:

- “My Talent Portfolio” – an online portfolio for students to create and post writings, Internet links, images, and other work on projects or areas of interest.

- Student responses to a series of unique and specially crafted “Open-ended Questions,” focusing on thought-provoking areas of inquiry.
- Student answers to the “Self-Assessment” questionnaires about each of the 14 enrichment categories.
- Student selections of “My Favorite” resources and their ratings of any or all enrichment database entries.

These services help personalize a student’s learning experience, and provide all students with outstanding opportunities to express their views, needs, experiences, and aspirations.

Teacher/Administrator/Parental Management Tools

The RLS features a collection of administrative reports designed to help make the process of enriching each students learning process more efficient. These tools enable teachers, parents, and other mentors to learn more about their students and to make grouping and enrichment easier. Reports include printable listings of:

- Individual and summary student interests
- Individual and summary student expression styles
- Individual and summary student learning styles
- Individual by any combination of interests and styles
- Individual student profiles

Also available are reports and documents associated with:

- Registration information – along with the ability to edit student records (at the teacher-level) and teacher records (at the manager-level).
- Learning maps for enrichment differentiation activities
- Down-loadable enrichment projects
- Down-loadable creativity training activities
- Background articles by leading educational practitioners
- Lesson plans for using the RLS effectively
- Outstanding websites for teachers

The Renzulli Learning System is a new and stimulating tool for students, teachers and parents. This unique web-based on-line program matches students’ interests, learning styles, expression styles, abilities and grade level to thousands of opportunities designed to provide enriched, challenging learning. In the process, it can improve test scores and help engender students’ commitment to their educational pursuits.

For teachers, the RLS uses state-of-the-art-technology can help to raise classroom productivity and efforts to differentiate dramatically. It can give teachers a virtual equivalent of multiple “teaching assistants” in their classrooms—each and every day—for a very reasonable cost.

Teachers can find articles about offering differentiated, enriching learning opportunities for students on Renzulli Learning, and they can also access exciting web sites to help their own

teaching and download creative activities to use in their classroom. They can chart their students' progress by accessing their profiles and viewing all of the activities and assessments that they have completed. Teachers using this system can even submit their own ideas for activities and interact with other teachers, enrichment specialists, curriculum coordinators, and administrators from around the country. Finally, parents have their own web site to view their child's progress and his or her profile. There are articles selected for parents, as well as helpful links to web sites, that are updated on a regular basis.