



October 2022

RENZULLI CENTER NEWS

Special Category

Inspirational Quote

Joe wanted to pass along these words of wisdom —

“I know of no single formula for success. But over the years I have observed that some attributes of leadership are universal and are often about finding ways of encouraging people to combine their efforts, their talents, their insights, their enthusiasm, and their inspiration to work together.” — Queen Elizabeth II

Upcoming Events

Free Online SEM Course Starts October 10

Just for you—a free on-line course that provides an in-depth, comprehensive overview of the [Schoolwide Enrichment Model \(SEM\)](#).

2022-23 Online Webinar Series Registration Open

University of Connecticut’s Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development will offer free webinars in 2022-23 for parents and educators. Don’t miss this opportunity to interact with recognized gifted education leaders and scholars online (<https://gifted.uconn.edu/events/>).

Research

UConn Ph.D. Grad Rubenstein Awarded \$2.6M

Ball State University's **Teachers College** has been awarded a \$2.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) to develop and implement an inclusive approach to identifying and supporting gifted students with disabilities.

"Appropriate identification of both giftedness and disabilities is imperative to ensure students receive appropriate support services in school. However, traditional identification systems have not resulted in equitable identification or service provision for gifted students with disabilities," said **Dr. Lisa Rubenstein**, professor of **Educational Psychology** at Ball State and project director/co-principal investigator for the grant. Read more at <https://www.bsu.edu/news/press-center/archives/2022/09/teachers-college-awarded-grant-to-develop-program-to-support-gifted-students-with-disabilities>

Awards, Publications, and Presentations

Lihong Xie Awarded Summer Fellowship

Doctoral student Lihong Xie received a summer 2022 research fellowship from the [Wood/Raith Gender Identity Living Trust](#). Lihong is working on a project entitled "Teachers' Perceptions and Implementation of Gendered Practices in Classrooms Developing Computational Thinking." Congratulations to Lihong for her efforts!

Graduate Student Recognitions

Two of our current doctoral students were recognized with scholarships at the Neag School of Education's Annual Scholarship Awards Celebration on September 28, 2022.

Shana Lusk was a recipient of an award from the J. Raymond and Augusta H. Gerberish Fellowship Fund.

Lihong Xie received an award from the Joseph Renzulli and Sally Reis Renzulli Fund for Graduate Studies in Gifted Education.

Congratulations to Shana and Lihong for their accomplishments, and thanks to the donors who support student scholarships for the Neag School!

James Kaufman in Podcast on Meditation

Show: Psychoanalyzing The Patient

Episode 2 analyzes and interprets The Patient with psychologist Dr. James Kaufman. Dr. Kaufman specializes in 'Malevolent Creativity.'

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/alan-learns-to-meditate-w-dr-james-kaufman/id1643178678?i=1000579343823>

Celebration! Being a Changemaker

We are pleased to congratulate Nicole Waicunas, the Renzulli Center's Schoolwide Enrichment Model Outreach Coordinator, for her work with educators at the Aditya Birla Education Academy in India. The academy recently recognized Nicole for her work with teachers, administrators, parents, and students in schools throughout India. Whether Nicole worked with several hundred administrators, via WebEx, or she worked with small groups of teachers, parents, and students to discuss the power of individual gifts and talents, her work sharing the Schoolwide Enrichment Model and the power of infusion is influencing change in schools and classrooms all over India!

Dear Nicole:

Greetings from Aditya Birla Education Academy!! Hope you're doing well.

As educators the challenges that you have faced in the last two years have been like never before and so much to unlearn and relearn. You have quickly adapted to the changing landscape and also lead many more teachers in the path of learning to reskill and upskill to ensure vibrant classrooms where meaningful learning is happening.

Behind each of these teachers and students working to upskill them, are educators such as you!

As Denzel Washington says: "At the end of the day, it's not about what you have or even what you've accomplished. It's about what you've done with those accomplishments.

It's about who you've lifted up, who you've made better. It's about what you've given back."

*You have been a **Changemaker** and taken steps to ensure your teachers power through the year via constant support, guidance, and the opportunity to upskill. You have led the way to show everyone around how important it is to adapt to changing times by constantly learning new skills, pedagogies, and teaching techniques.*

*We, at the **Aditya Birla Education Academy** recognize your effort and would like to invite you to a virtual felicitation ceremony by our **Founder & Chairperson, Mrs. Neerja Birla**, where*

we acknowledge educators such as you who have chosen to inspire others to change for the better.

To learn more about the Schoolwide Enrichment Model, please visit our website at <https://gifted.uconn.edu>. To connect with Nicole Waicunas, SEM Outreach Coordinator, please email her at nicole.waicunas@uconn.edu

Fun and Useful Resources: From Us to You

Switzerland and the SEM: A Visit to Hartford

February, 2022

Good morning Nicole,

I hope your Tuesday is off to a great start! I'd like to introduce you to Helen Kolly, who is from Bern, Switzerland. We met over Zoom, and had a great conversation about G/T education and SEM. She will be visiting the US this summer and into September and will be visiting Renzulli Academy. She would also like to visit other SEM schools, and I told her I would put her in touch with you, as the Outreach Coordinator. Would it be possible for you to give her some schools to reach out to see if she can visit?

Let me know if I can facilitate in any way.

Thanks Nicole!

Francie Sierra-Re

So often, here at the Renzulli Center, we have the opportunity to connect with educators from all over the world. Whether they contact us from India, Greece, the Netherlands, China, Turkey, Spain, Italy, Chile, Israel, or so many others, they all want to have the chance to see the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) in action. Then, they take what they learn, and infuse it into their own schools and classrooms in their home countries.

Helen Kolly had tremendous excitement and many questions as the new head of gifted and talented education in her city. Her goal in visiting us in Connecticut was to discover resources to help her teachers become the facilitators of learning for each of the students who enter their classrooms. Her own research had led her to The Schoolwide Enrichment Model. Through her research she came to understand that the model will help her teachers to create opportunities for students to find the very best of themselves and be able to share their discoveries with others.

Helen's excitement was contagious! Soon, she was sharing her students' and teachers' work with me. After a short time of communicating through email and WebEx, I emailed Joe Renzulli and Sally Reis to exclaim: "I have already begun to help her plan her trip, sent her resources, and we are definitely, already friends. I actually think we may be long lost sisters!" Her excitement to visit the Renzulli Academy grew, and Vice Principal Francie Sierra-Re and her team began to look forward to, and plan her visit.

For the students and teachers of the Renzulli Academy, Helen's visit provides both students and teachers with a chance to share who they are, what they are working on, and how they hope to build upon their current experiences. From language arts and science to a class that focuses on the students as individuals striving to discover and build upon their own gifts and talents throughout the year, to math and history/social studies, Helen had the chance to speak with teachers, as well as students.

She also had the occasion to speak, at length, with Francie, about how the school works, and how instruction responds to students' interests and preferences. In classrooms where Enjoyment, Engagement, and Enthusiasm for Learning are the focus, along with each student's interests, there is always potential for students to discover something new and interesting to each of them.

Upon her return home, Helen expressed her thanks and her hopes: *"I want to express my gratitude for that special experience at Renzulli Academy. I am incredibly appreciative of the chance to meet Francie, you, and the other instructors and students.*

I'm hoping we stay in touch. Looking forward to where it all takes us.

My special thanks to Francie and the team."

If there is one thing I know for sure, it is that the Schoolwide Enrichment Model has the potential to take all of us to a place that provides a better understanding of ourselves and a clearer picture of who we can be, as well as how we can become those people. The Renzulli Academy Team did such a wonderful job of being exactly who they are: fantastic teachers who see the child as an individual, look for the best in each child, and strive to find ways to help each child strengthen the best within self, as well as challenge each child to foster their talents, and strive to share what they discover.

The school year has just begun, and Helen has already promised that students in Bern will want to work with students at the Renzulli Academy. They can't wait.

For more information on the Schoolwide Enrichment Model, please visit our website at <https://gifted.uconn.edu>. Please also feel free to reach out to our SEM Outreach Coordinator Nicole Waicunas at nicole.waicunas@uconn.edu.

For more information, contact: Nicole Waicunas at (860)336-7835

