March 2010

Fremont’s Lifetime Investment in Gifted & Highly Talented Students

Research Revelations

Monday evening, March 15th, students from the Fremont FLIGHTS Gifted Program presented the culmination of their independent research projects at the district’s second Research Revelations.

Over 90 students from grades three through six gathered at the Vanguard Tech Center to present their projects publicly before the Fremont Board of Education meeting.

Students in the third and fourth grades had projects developed around the theme of “Inventors and Inventions”, and fifth and sixth graders had projects built on the theme of “Space.”
Research Revelations
Newbery Books

This spring, the 5th and 6th graders in the FLIGHTS program will choose a Newbery book to read. Students will be reading their selected novel and completing a Bloom’s Taxonomy Book Review Packet. The packet is filled with questions and activities that will correlate with their novel.

The John Newbery Medal is a literary award given by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association (ALA). The award is given to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. The award has been given since 1922. It was the first children’s literary award in the world. It is named for John Newbery, an 18th century English publisher of juvenile books. The Newbery Medal was designed by Rene Paul Chambellan and created by Frederic G. Melcher in 1921. It depicts on the obverse an author giving his work (a book) to a boy and a girl to read. Together with the Caldecott Medal, the Newbery is considered one of the two most prestigious awards for children’s literature in the United States. When the winner is announced each January, bookstores sell out, libraries order copies, and teachers add the book to their lesson plans. Many bookstores and libraries have Newbery sections; popular television shows interview the winners; textbooks include lists of Newbery winners, and many master’s and doctoral theses are written about them.

In addition to the Newbery medal, the committee awards additional citations referred to as the Newbery Honor to worthy runners-up. Though the Newbery Honor was initiated in 1971, specially cited runners-up for the Newbery Medal from previous years were retroactively named Newbery Honor books.

Only five authors have won multiple Newbery Medals: E.L. Konigsburg, Joseph Krumgold, Lois Lowry, Katherine Patterson, and Elizabeth George Speare have each been awarded two Newbery Medals. The author with the most Newbery Honors but without a Newbery Medal is Laura Ingalls Wilder; she received 5 Newbery Honors.

Mandy Bova

BGSU Planetarium Visit

On Thursday, March 25th, fifth and sixth grade students from the Fremont FLIGHTS program will be traveling to Bowling Green State University for the culmination of their study of “space”.

Planetarium Director, Dr. Dale Smith, will be conducting a multi media presentation for the students. The planetarium is considered to be a Theatre of the Universe. Students will be surrounded with an accurate image of the night sky. In the presentation students will be shown slides, video, visual effects, computer animations, narration, and music that reveal the wonders of the cosmos. Following the presentation students, will be involved in a question/answer session with Dr. Smith.
Creativity in Young Children

Just as all children are not equally intelligent, all children are not equally creative. But just as all children exhibit behaviors which evidence intelligence from birth, they also exhibit behaviors which evidence the potential for creativity.

At around the age of five, we are using about 80% of our creative potential. By around the age of twelve, our creative output has declined to about 2% of our potential, and it generally stays there for the rest of our lives. Creativity is a form of problem solving. It is a special type that involves problems for which there are no easy answers. Creativity also involves adaptability and flexibility of thought.

As parents, creativity can be encouraged in several ways. You can provide an environment that allows your student to explore and play without undue restraints. You could also adapt to your student’s ideas rather than trying to structure their ideas to fit yours. Always accept unusual ideas from your student by suspending judgment of your student’s divergent problem solving. Allow your student time to explore all possibilities, moving from popular to more original ideas. And finally, emphasize process rather than the product.

Creativity “killers” in which creativity can be discouraged would include: constantly hovering over your student while they are working; constantly making students worry about how they are doing; excessive use of prizes which deprives a student of the intrinsic pleasure of creating; putting students in a win-lose situation, where only one person can come out on top; constantly telling your student how to do things; and finally, establishing grandiose expectations for a student’s performance.

Once again, the Sandusky, Seneca & Ottawa counties recycling programs will be sponsoring their Summer Earth Camps. The Sandusky County Earth Camp will be held on Tuesday, June 15th from 8:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Jennifer Sherman, Sandusky County Educational Specialist, heads this camp. The camp will be held at the recycling office located at 1875 East State Street in Fremont.

In order to participate, students must pre-register. Registration forms can be obtained by calling the Recycling Office: 419-334-6228 or by emailing jshman@recycleoss.org.

In addition, there will be camps held at Meadowbrook Park in Bascom, sponsored by the Seneca Co. Recycling on Tuesday, June 8th; and one held at Lakeview Park in Port Clinton on Friday, June 11th.
Very frequently, teachers in gifted education talk about “higher level thinking skills”. We assume we know what we are talking about and that others should too. Maybe our most recent research project in FLIGHTS illustrates this concept the best. Most teaching moves from the simplest skills to the more involved skills.

There is a visual illustration of this, created by Benjamin Bloom, called Bloom’s Taxonomy. It is an isosceles triangle or pyramid with layers. The base of the triangle is the base of all learning – Remembering. In the research project, our first step was brainstorming, exploration, and selecting. Once the students had selected a topic for learning, they started to read and make notes. The notes are for the memory, hopefully.

creativity evaluation analyzing applying understanding remembering

This step of reading and making notes leads to the next level of thinking, Understanding. This part of the process consumed a lot of the students’ time, as well it should, since it is the basis for some of the higher level thought. Some students do not look as if they are following this process, but even without the note cards, they are gathering information and beginning to put it together. One student told me he made his notes on the computer and “cut and pasted” his notes when he started to organize.

Organization, where does that fall on the pyramid of skills? It is the next stair, the next layer of thinking, Applying. Organization for our students involved sorting their information into outlines, timelines, and written descriptions. While doing this, they moved quickly to Analysis, examining the data gathered and thinking of ways to assemble it on their posters, sometimes making charts, Venn diagrams, written descriptions, or selecting pictures that convey their knowledge. All of these do not happen distinctly at different times. As most people have seen, sometimes a student will skip to Evaluation of his product before he finishes and decide he needs to return to another level. Editing fits into the Analysis category, but also involves Evaluation, and sometimes Creating.

Creating is considered to be the highest level of thinking. That is why, in our process, we made the “product” the last of our assignments. Creativity can occur at any level, and as we have seen, some students use it in all their assignments. However, creativity can hardly occur without some of the other processes. Even when a creative product is done, a student will sometimes change his work. When he does this, he is not only using creativity, but analysis, understanding, memory, evaluation, and applying. Creating is at the top, not because it stands alone, but because it is supported by all the other skills.

We like to think of the learning skills as more mobile and interactive than the Bloom’s pyramid. The following diagram describes the interaction of learning skills, if you can imagine that at any time the flow can be interrupted to go to another level, even out of sequence.

Paula Cronan
A look at Multiple Intelligences

By: Erika Heuser

In 1983, Howard Gardner, (a professional at Harvard), determined that there were many ways that students learn. The following are the Multiple Intelligences that he discovered:

- **Verbal/Linguistic**—(“word smart”) Ability to use words and language and have highly developed auditory skills. Think in words rather than pictures and are generally elegant speakers.

  **Skills:** speaking, listening, writing, story telling, teaching, remembering information

  **Possible Careers:** poet, journalist, writer, teacher, lawyer, politician, translator

- **Logical/Mathematical**—(“number/reasoning smart”) Think conceptually in logical and numerical patterns, making connections between pieces of information. Always curious about the world around them. Ask lots of questions and like experiments.

  **Skills:** problem solving, classifying, and categorizing information, doing controlled experiments, mathematical calculation

  **Possible Careers:** scientist, engineer, accountant, computer programmer, mathematician

- **Visual/Spatial**—(“picture smart”) Tend to think in pictures and need to create vivid mental images to retain information. Enjoy looking at maps, charts, pictures, videos, movies, etc.

  **Skills:** puzzle building, reading, writing, understanding charts/graphs, a good sense of direction, painting

  **Possible Careers:** engineer, architect, interior designer, navigator, visual artist

- **Bodily/Kinesthetic**—(“body smart”) Ability to control body movements and handle objects skillfully. Express themselves through movement and have a good sense of balance and hand-eye coordination.

  **Skills:** sports, hands-on experiments, dancing, acting, building

  **Possible Careers:** athletes, actors, physical education teachers, firefighters

- **Musical/Rhythmic**—(“music smart”) Ability to appreciate music and think in sounds, rhythms, and patterns. Immediately respond to music, either appreciating or criticizing what they hear. Many musical learners are extremely sensitive to environmental sounds (e.g. crickets, bells, dripping taps, etc.)

  **Skills:** singing, remembering melodies, composing music, playing instruments,

  **Possible Careers:** musician, singer, disk jockey, composer

- **Interpersonal**—(“people smart”) Ability to relate to and understand others. They try to see from other people’s point of view in order to understand how they feel. Ability to sense feelings, intentions, and motivations. Generally great organizers and try to maintain peace in group settings and encourage cooperation.

  **Skills:** seeing things from multiple perspectives, counseling, listening, cooperating with groups, using empathy

  **Possible Careers:** counselor, salesperson, politician, business person

- **Intrapersonal**—(“self smart”) Ability to self-reflect and be aware of one’s inner state of being. These learners try to understand their inner feelings, dreams, relationships with others, and strengths and weaknesses.

  **Skills:** recognizing own strengths and weaknesses, reflecting, analyzing, evaluating thinking patterns

  **Possible Careers:** researcher, theorist, philosopher

***“Triple Coding”—If students can use 3 or more of the Multiple Intelligences simultaneously, they will dramatically increase the speed with which they learn.**
As we begin to look into the upcoming months, we find that summer is right around the corner and knowing gifted kids… they are always looking for something to do. In order to match their interests, abilities, and developmental needs, you need to spend some time thinking about what you want for your child. Be sure to give your student the opportunity to talk about the kinds of activities that he/she finds fun, engaging, and rewarding. That could be traditional recreational activities, athletic, or academic programs.

I would suggest that Fremont students take advantage of the great summer reading programs that Birchard Public Library provides. These will soon be made available to the students as the librarians will be making the rounds of the elementary buildings and talking about their reading program with the various special programs, crafts, and discussion groups available.

Another suggestion would be to team up with another family that has kids that are either friends of your students or someone from your local neighborhood. Trade off days of hosting the kids.

A third suggestion would be to get your student involved in lessons or sports. These activities teach skills and offer students an opportunity to try something different - soccer, swimming, art, dance, music lessons.

Being in Fremont, we all should take advantage of the many free offerings at the Hayes Presidential Center. Beginning in early June, there are the Veranda Concerts which this year will include performances by Fremont Community Theatre, the Jammin’ Grammas, the Glass City Dixieland Band, the Terra Brass Choir, the Ottawa County Bluegrass Band, and the North Coast Big Band. Also this year, take in a vintage baseball game with the local, "Squires", and even take part in a croquet game.

Terra Community College will be offering up it’s annual Kids College the week of July 19. This year, they will also be offering several all day events that will include field trips. That information will be available the first of May. Again this year, I will offering at least two special camps as a part of that program.

Along with Terra’s program, the Tiffin City Schools HEIGHTS program will be offering three weeks of summer camps in June. Their camps usually are two hours in length, for one week’s time. This year, they will be having offerings in many different areas. Copies of those schedules will be coming home with our gifted students in April.

Other summer offerings can be found on the OAGC( Ohio Association of Gifted Children ) website (www.oagc.com). Go to the website and click on the map provided.
This past fall, all fifth grade students in the Fremont City School District were screened for gifted identification. The students were tested in the following academic areas: reading, mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The students were also given the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) in order to receive an IQ score.

The Iowa Test is a nationally normed test, meaning student test scores are compared to those who have taken this test nationally. An average score on an Iowa Test is a 50 NPR (National Percentile Rank). In order to be considered identified as gifted in the state of Ohio, a student must earn a National Percentile Rank (NPR) score of 95 in an academic total area, such as “Reading Total”.

The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) is also a nationally normed test, comparing test scores across the nation of like aged students. An average score on the CogAT test is a 100 Standard Age Score (SAS). In order to be considered for identification as gifted in the state of Ohio, a student must earn a SAS score of 129 at the fifth grade level.

You may be asking the question: “My student was identified gifted in the second grade, but did not earn the necessary scores to be identified gifted this time around, now what?” The state of Ohio has said that “once a student is identified as gifted, they are always identified as gifted”. The students cannot be “unlabeled” as gifted. However, new gifted identifications can be added.

We also have what are called screening scores based on these tests. A screening score means that a student has scored within a range of scores in which they need individual testing to see if they can be identified as gifted.

Although we tested the students in all academic areas, currently Fremont City Schools has only chosen to serve the students identified in the areas of reading/language arts, and math. The identification in science and social studies may open doors for those students in the future.

Whether you are a new parent to gifted or a veteran parent to gifted, if you have any questions about the testing from this past fall, please contact me.

Kendra Nelson
Congratulations
Dave Mowrey
on your retirement
You will be missed by all of us.

Web Sites:
Time for Kid’s: http://www.timeforkids.com
Fun School: http://funschool.kaboose.com/
Willy Wonka, Feed Your Imagination: http://www.wonka.com/#/home
Sports Illustrated for Kids: http://www.sikids.com/
Scholastic News: http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/classmags.jsp?srclId=74
Mark Kisler's Online Art Lessons (Imagination Station): http://www.draw3d.com/OnlineVideo.html
White House for Kids: http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/white-house-101/
Weekly Reader: http://weeklyreader.com/
National Geographic Kids: http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/
Steve Spangler Science Experiments; http://www.stevespanglerscience.com/experiments/

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We are currently preparing students for jobs and technologies that don’t yet exist….In order to solve problems we don’t even know are problems yet.

Karl Fisch

You will be missed by all of us.

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