

GT: 1st 9 Weeks

A review of the 1st 9 weeks in the 2021-2022 school year.

GT Curriculum

1st: Storybook STEM

I can connect literature to the world around me.

Students explored STEM materials in relatively open-ended tasks to get used to building and working towards a goal independently and a common goal as a team. The class read *Press Here* and discussed cause/effect, ending punctuation, patterns, and higher level vocabulary. Students were tasked with building a structure that featured the STEM vocabulary words action, reaction, collide, and motion.

2nd: Coding/Cultures

I can break a complex task into simple parts.

In their general education classroom, students are working independently to solve different puzzles built into code.org. Students are working at various levels depending on their ability and the time put into it. This is available to them inside and outschool of school hours and is completely self-paced.

I understand that people have similarities and differences based on their culture.

Students began this unit by making a map of the world to reference as we learned about different people and places. As a class, we are reading *This Is How We Do It* and learning about how different children around the world go to school, eat, and live.

3rd: Genius Hour

I can use effective search terms to get relevant results to in-depth questions.

I can research and take valid and credible notes from multiple sources without plagiarizing.

Students learned how to appropriately and effectively search the internet using google as a search engine. Students are in the process of learning how to research and take notes, in their own words, while giving credit to the source they found the information in. *This is a HARD unit. This unit is often "not fun." However, this unit teaches skills that are critical to their education and adult life. Please encourage your child to persevere- it will be worth it!

4th: Perspectives/The Great Chocolate Caper

I can identify different perspectives in a story.

The students will be learning about perspectives all year long. We started with the movie Horton Hears a Who and most recently ended with analyzing lyrics of Popular (from the musical Wicked).

I can solve logic puzzles and syllogisms.

I can create generalizations and conclusions.

I can differentiate between useful facts and extraneous information.

The students just started The Great Chocolate Caper...you might have heard about/seen the mess we made while making our own chocolate recipes! The activity was SO much fun. It combined research, math, and science and was the perfect starter to our new unit.

5th: Fermi

I understand that in certain situations, an estimate is as useful as an exact answer.

Students learned about the Italian-American nuclear physicist Enrico Fermi and how he estimated his way to solving unique problems. They solved several Fermi problems and then created their own math inquiry to solve and present in front of the class. Some of the inquiries were:

- How many chess games can you play in 24 hours?
- How many 1 inch rocks can fit on the moon?
- How many ping pong balls does it take to fill a space shuttle?

6th: Fibonacci

I can identify Fibonacci numbers in the world around us such as nature, architecture, poetry and art.

Students discovered number patterns in various ways following the Fibonacci sequence of 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, etc. Their final project was to make art using squares containing those measurements (1"x1", 2"x2", 3"x3", 5"x5") and poems containing those syllables/line. Some of the poems were:

- Rulers

What

is

up with

Rulers Like

Why can they only

Measure up to one foot, like why?

- Stars

The

stars

glowing

are falling

sail across the sky

it's the great dance of the comets

- Writing Poems

I

like

writing

poems and

freestyle is my

favorite because i can be

as creative and fun as I want with my poems.

Camp El Tesoro 2021

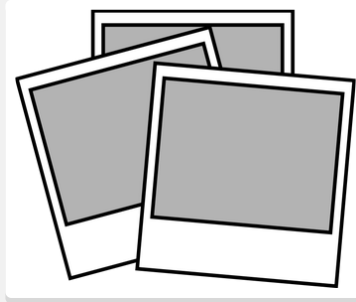
Godley's GT students in first through sixth grade were invited to participate in an outdoor camp at El Tesoro over fall break. 23 students attended the day camp and 57 students attended the overnight

camp. They participated in a variety of activities to help build communication, cooperation, and perseverance skills. Some of the favorite activities of the campers were archery and the high ropes course. The high ropes course, only available to those 8+ who stayed the night, was definitely the most challenging physically and mentally. My favorite quote was from one of the counselors: "It's called the challenge course not the easy course." Many students tried, some failed, but all learned that there is room for improvement in our abilities. The students discovered that not all classrooms have four walls.

PS: Multiple El Tesoro staff members complimented the behavior and manners of our students.



Day Campers

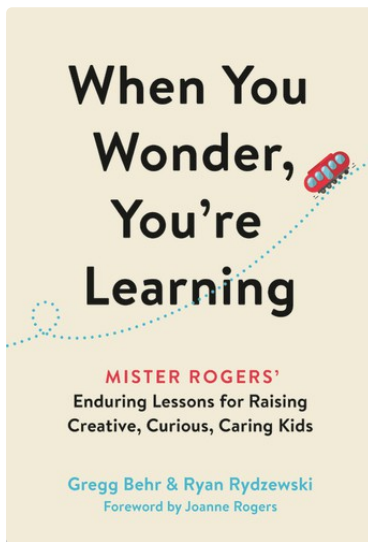


More Pictures

<https://www.icloud.com/sharidalbum/#B0i5n8hH4c7bj>
[H](#)



Overnight Campers



When You Wonder, You're Learning

Throughout this school year, I'm going to share my favorite pieces from this book. Most of these are direct quotes. If you're impatient and want to get through it quicker yourself, you're welcome to buy it on [Amazon](#). 😊

- Curiosity leads to exploration. Exploration leads to questions, and questions threaten the status quo. Curiosity is power.
- Curiosity is also a privilege- one extended to kids whose basic survival needs have already been met. If kids are hungry or hurting or scared, they're less likely to have the luxury of wondering. This is one of the many factors that put kids from poverty at a disadvantage: they're often forced to devote precious cognitive resources to things their more affluent peers take for granted. Some kids are more likely to wonder where their next meal is coming from rather than what a meteor is made of.
- "To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way [one] achieves his own identity...But no society is really anxious to have that kind of person around. What societies really, ideally, want is a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society." -James Baldwin.
- Love learning in front of your kids. Let them catch a curiosity. Listen to the questions, learn their interest, and let them lead the journey toward knowledge.

- When kids are in a state of wonder, they're more likely to retain what they see, hear, and experience. Pay attention to what elicits children's curiosity- when their interest is piqued, their brains are primed for learning. When kids ask why the wind blows or why leaves change color in the fall, it's sometimes helpful to ask open-ended questions in return, especially if you're not entirely sure of the answer yourself. The process of discovery can be just as important as finding the factually correct answer.
- Kids can "catch" curiosity, so it's important for them to see adults indulging interest of their own. What makes you curious? What do you love to do, and why? If you're not sure, this is a great excuse to reexamine old hobbies
- It can be difficult for kids (and adults) to let go of the expectation that everything they encounter is part of a project that needs to be finished or done in a certain way. Be patient and encourage kids to examine things on their own terms. It can take time and even a bit of practice to let their curiosity flourish. Let them rebuild that Lego creation without the instructions- or ask them to add something unexpected.
- Over the past few decades, play has grown increasingly absent from children's lives. Busy lifestyles and an emphasis on academics have muscled playtime out of family and school routines. When kids do have time to play, they increasingly do so on electronic devices- which, though not inherently negative, aren't always as open-ended as puppets or a hunk of clay. In fact, by 2018, playtime's decline had become so severe the American Academy of Pediatrics released a "prescription" for the nation's parents: Play with your child. Every day. "Play is not frivolous" the doctors declared. "Play is fundamentally important for building 21st century skills, such as problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity...skills that are critical for adult success."
- Schedule "what now?" time. Put aside phones, turn off tv, and ask "what can we do together during these next thirty minutes?"

GT in the News

Sharing due to several people reaching out about this...

Gifted and Talented programs have been in the news recently and some states are even dropping their GT programs in an effort to remain equitable. Instead of examining their identification practices to ensure equity, they decided to remove them all together. For more information on this, I've linked two articles. Both articles each have their own biases and beliefs, but I think they each have valuable pieces to read and consider.



[NY Times: De Blasio to Phase Out N.Y.C. Gifted and Talented Program](#)

"Some experts believe that labeling students as gifted and plucking them out of general education classrooms altogether exacerbates segregation by removing resources from regular public schools, and siphoning the strongest students and teachers elsewhere. Researchers have argued that those children can still receive additional attention within normal classrooms.

But that requires many thousands of city educators to pull off some of the hardest work in public education: teaching children with a large range of abilities in one classroom, a practice known as differentiation.

"Differentiation is like a fuzzy blue unicorn, said Jonathan Plucker, a professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education and a proponent of gifted education whom the city consulted on its plan. "It would be great if everyone had one, I'm just not sure it's possible."

[National Review: The War on Gifted-and-Talented Programs](#)

"New York City's kindergarten test is open to legitimate criticism. By all means, school districts should take steps to ensure they are identifying gifted students from all sorts of backgrounds.

But ending dedicated classes for the gifted and insisting on classrooms with students of widely varying degrees of preparedness and ability isn't doing teachers, or anyone else, any favors.

The equality that matters is equality of opportunity toward the end of maximizing everyone's achievement, whether that means accelerating one student's instruction such that he or she is ready to go to college at age 16 or going at the pace appropriate to a kid who will have trouble earning a high-school diploma.

All these kids are of equal worth and dignity. That doesn't mean, though, that they should be in the same classroom taught the same materials on the same timetable."

Just an FYI: Texas has an accountability plan for GT programs. You can see the full plan [HERE](#). If you scroll down to 2.25, you'll see "The population of the gifted/talented services program is closely reflective of the population of the total district and/or campus." This does not mean that we have quotas to fill or push for certain groups to be identified. It means that we ensure equitable practices in identification through varied quantitative and qualitative data.



GT Game Night

We had originally planned to have a GT Game Night on November 4th. The 2-4 campus and 5-6 campus each have an event planned for 10/26. Since we are back to having in-person events, I would like your attention to be on these two. **We will not have a game night on 11/4.**

To view the games the program owns and maybe get an idea of a game or two you'd like to purchase for your house, check out the [Godley GT Parent Resource website](#). If you see one that is particularly interesting and would like to borrow it first, reach out and I'll send it home with your child.

PS: I'll be doing a read aloud in the CLI at the 2-4 campus 7:20-7:35 pm 10/26 if you want to stop by!

Mensa for Kids' Excellence in Reading

To encourage the joy of reading, the Foundation has developed the Mensa for Kids Excellence in Reading Program. Children can earn a commemorative certificate in recognition of their outstanding achievement and get an Excellence in Reading T-shirt, too!



[K-3 Reading List](#)

[4-6 Reading List](#)

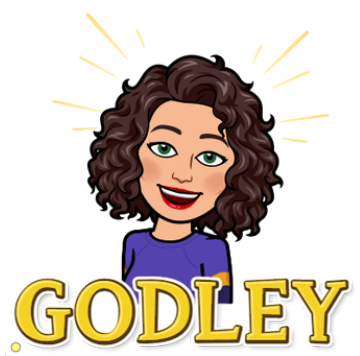
[Certificate + Shirt Request](#)



Beast Academy Playground

Several of my students have Beast Academy accounts. Those can be used in and out of school and are great for complex thinking with age appropriate math skills. Most recently, BA developed BA Playground. BA Playground helps kids build numerical literacy and problem-solving confidence. The playground is free to everyone, even if you don't have a BA account.


[Explore their growing collection of free tabletop math activities.](#)



Reach Out!

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