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RENZULLI LEARNING SYSTEMS

Frequently Asked Questions

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What is Renzulli Learning?

Renzulli Learning is a Web-based learning coach that allows teachers to use differentiated curriculum in the classroom by creating individualized assessment of each child's interests and preferred methods of engagement learning. It also delivers customized learning experiences to help them think and learn based on their personal strengths.

It provides strength-based achievement; assists teachers; and raises student test scores.

Renzulli Learning promotes engagement by fostering the love of learning among students. It is comprised of four key components providing a teacher's assistant that determines how each student likes to learn.

- **Renzulli Profiler.** The profiler allows teachers to receive a comprehensive learning assessment of each student's motivational makeup in about 45 minutes. The Profiler focuses on goal setting and strength-based life skills development.
- **Renzulli Differentiation Search Engine.** The differentiation search engine matches safe, classroom appropriate online and offline resources to each student's interest areas and learning styles. Content and concept retention increases dramatically due to the personalized relevance of a topic.
- **Lesson Planning and Differentiation Tool.** This allows teachers and students to work collaboratively on curricular topics, assignments, and projects. Teachers can differentiate and disseminate a lesson for each diverse segment of their classroom in less than 15 minutes.
- **Total Talent Portfolio.** The talent portfolio stores student products and records in an individualized learning environment that tracks student's progress. It is accessible anytime, anywhere and can transport student information from grade-to-grade, or school-to-school.

The Renzullis have been doing this for 30-40 years. What are you announcing now, and what is different from what they have always done?

The Renzulli Learning program has been in practice for many years. Over the past few years, RLS has utilized technology to make it accessible and as easy to use as possible for students and teachers and has piloted the program among schools across the United States. Today, RLS is announcing the availability of its latest version to all schools and educators.

The latest version of RLS includes several new enhancements focusing on tools to give teachers more reporting and accountability capabilities including the following.

- **Lesson Planning and Differentiation** allows teachers to create lessons from existing enrichment activities. It also allows teachers to create a compacting form used when students

demonstrate mastery of a particular lesson. Instead of becoming bored, it easily utilizes curricular compacting to give students additional lessons and tasks designed to expand their learning based on abilities and interests.

- **Activities Manager** provides additional differentiation activities among groups of various ability levels.
- The **Teacher Portfolio** brings strong teacher reporting tools designed to provide accurate accountability of curriculum and student assessment by creating a digital portfolio of student work and achievement. It allows teachers to upload to RLS documents that can be shared among other teachers, peers, parents, and among students.

What statistics do you have to show RLS has been successful in raising test scores?

An independent study was conducted in January 2007 on the effect Renzulli Learning has on student learning and test score improvement. The study conducted among 198 middle school students and 185 elementary students, who used Renzulli Learning for 2-3 hours per week for 16 weeks, showed increased test scores over a control group who did not use the system. Compared to the control group, students using Renzulli Learning experienced an increase of 32 percent in oral reading fluency, 62 percent in social studies, and an astounding 147 percent in reading comprehension.

Curriculum-based measures of oral reading fluency were used for the independent study. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills was used for reading comprehension, science achievement, and social studies achievement. For additional information about the study call 877-429-1955. Editors/journalists call 860-676-2300 x118.

What ages is RLS appropriate for?

Renzulli Learning is appropriate for grades K-12. There are resources to challenge all student ability levels, and is being used by schools from every demographic and socio-economic segment. It is also appropriate for all teachers and teaching situations from special education to at-risk, to gifted and talented.

Where did it come from?

It is based on the Enrichment Triad Model following more than 30 years of research on teaching and learning by Dr. Sally Reis and Dr. Joseph Renzulli. Collectively, they have researched, studied and developed teaching methods designed to leverage the gifts and talents of all students. Their work has shown that differentiated curriculum does improve student achievement, creativity, engagement, attitudes toward school, and school attendance.

What is the Enrichment Triad Model? How is it implemented in RLS?

The Enrichment Triad Model was designed to encourage advanced student learning and creative productivity in three key areas by: exposing students to various topics, areas of interest, and fields of study in which they have an interest; providing students with the skills and resources necessary to acquire advanced level content and thinking skills; and creating opportunities for students to apply their skills to self-selected areas of interest and problems they want to pursue.

The Enrichment Triad Model was developed in 1977 by Dr. Joseph Renzulli and Dr. Sally Reis. It was implemented in thousands of schools in the U.S. and other parts of the globe through a wide range of programs developed by classroom teachers and education specialists in many different school districts serving diverse populations of students at all grade levels.

The Renzulli Learning system utilizes the model to make thousands of resources and enrichment materials for teachers and students with the click of a mouse—resources tailored to students' abilities, interests, and learning styles.

Additional information about the Enrichment Triad Model and its use in Renzulli Learning can be obtained upon request by reading Dr. Renzulli's "A Dozen Assistants In Your Classroom –Every Day, All Day: A New On-Line Resource for *Truly* Individualized Differentiation."

Is research ongoing?

Yes.

Is RLS just for gifted and talented students?

No. It is for use with all students. It will in fact help discover the gifts and talents of all students that may have been missed without RLS.

What does differentiated instruction mean?

Differentiated instruction is a teaching style that applies learning to the individual interests and personal preference of each student—allowing them to learn in the best way for them as an individual.

What is the relationship with the University of Connecticut Research and Development Company?

Renzulli Learning Systems, LLC is a University of Connecticut Research and Development Corporation company. The University of Connecticut Research and Development Corporation is a for-profit subsidiary of the UConn Foundation that initiates new business start-ups based on innovative technologies developed by the faculty and staff of the University of Connecticut.

How is the company funded?

RLS is privately funded.

What are some of the issues in education that are addressed by RLS?

Many of the solutions developed to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act have left schools joyless places promoting boredom, absenteeism, and increased dropout rates. RLS believes it is good for students, teachers, administrators and schools to have increased accountability, but the intense focus on test scores has established teaching practices that are weakness-based, highly prescriptive, and do not motivate students to love learning.

RLS believes the U.S. school system can gain meaningful, long-term improvements in test scores for all students by giving them enriched motivational experiences that promote engagement. Renzulli Learning provides this for all students.

How are teachers and educators currently addressing these issues?

Despite the desires and best intentions of teachers and educators, they find themselves increasingly teaching to a test. Differentiated teaching, and personal engagement with students that fosters strength-based learning and achievement, is sorely lacking.

Renzulli provides a virtual teaching assistant designed to assist teachers in helping their students become more engaged and enthusiastic about education leading to increased study time, fewer behavioral problems, self-directed learning, and higher test scores.

Without getting into details at this point, what is the single best benefit RLS provides students, teachers/educators?

It raises test scores by creating student achievement based on strengths, engagement, and differentiated curriculum.

How does it work?

Once schools subscribe to RLS, teachers and students immediately have access to it anywhere they have a computer and Internet service. Students sign on to the system with a user ID and password.

What does the Profiler do?

The Renzulli Profiler allows teachers to receive a comprehensive learning assessment of each student's motivational makeup in about 45 minutes. This allows teachers to understand their student's personal interests for better engagement and differentiated learning in a matter of days or weeks instead of months.

It creates a personalized profile of each student's academic strengths, interests, learning styles, and preferred modes of expression.

What is the Differentiation Search Engine? Is it secure?

The differentiation search engine examines thousands of resources that relate to each student's profile. It matches student strengths and interests to an enrichment database of over 15,000 activities, materials, resources, and opportunities for further study. It promotes high levels of engagement where students can think, feel, and do. Resources are grouped into 14 categories:

- Virtual Field Trips
- Real Field Trips
- Creativity Training
- Critical Thinking
- Projects and Independent Study
- Contests and Competitions
- Web sites
- Fiction Books
- Non-Fiction Books
- How-To Books
- Summer Programs
- On-Line Classes and Activities
- Research Skills
- Videos and DVDs

The resources help students find and focus a problem or creative exploration of personal interest they want to pursue. They are encouraged to apply the knowledge they gain.

Learning maps for teachers are provided for each of the fourteen enrichment resource databases to be used in curricular activities for their classrooms.

The differentiation search engine provides a safe and secure Internet experience allowing students access to only approved resources.

What is the Lesson Planning and Differentiation Tool?

The Wizard Project Maker allows teachers and students to develop problem-based projects for regular curricular topics. It helps students understand 'the why' of using the Internet by helping them make the best use of web resources and helps focus their interests as they pursue advanced level work. It helps students define a project and set a goal for achievement.

What is the Total Talent Portfolio?

The talent portfolio provides parents and teachers with records of each student's progress. It is accessible anywhere and can transport their information from grade to grade, or school to school.

It stores all student activities through the Renzulli Learning system. It allows students to evaluate each site visited and resources used. They can also complete a self-assessment of what they derived from the resource and can store favorite activities and resources.

The portfolio can be reviewed at any time by teachers and parents. It is an ongoing record that can help students, teachers, guidance counselors, and parents make decisions about future educational and vocational plans.

How much does it cost?

Renzulli Learning is available to all schools and school districts. It costs a maximum of \$40 each up to 40 students, or \$5,000 per school regardless of the number of students. The system can be purchased with funds from Title 1, Title2D, Title 5, curriculum, Technology or Special Education budgets, PTOs and parents.

How does RLS utilize technology?

Renzulli Learning is Web-based. It requires no software downloads or maintenance fees. It is easily integrated into curriculum, requires only basic staff development, and can be implemented using current technology infrastructures. It allows educators to fully utilize technology to teach instead of teaching technology.

How many schools are currently using Renzulli? Students?

Currently, approximately 200,000 students have access to Renzulli Learning in 350 U.S. school districts including Los Angeles Unified Schools, Long Beach Unified Schools, New York City Public Schools, Hillsborough County Schools, Pinellas county Schools, Fort Worth Independent School District, Atlanta City Schools, Calcasieu Parish, St. Paul Public Schools, and Fairfax County Schools.

Can RLS be used in the home or at the public library?

Yes. It can be accessed wherever computers with Internet access are available. The program cannot be purchased by individual parents at this time, however if a school system purchases on behalf of a student, the child's parents receive access to the program at no additional charge.

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