

The Salt Lake Tribune

Brainiacs on the loose: high schoolers excel in super summer studies

By Ben Fuller

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At 17, Taylorsville high school student Carroll Glidden has a summer schedule so packed it might make even some professional adults wince.

All he knows for certain, though, is that a casual run-down of his wall-to-wall weekly calendar means he gets a hard time from his friends.

"If you want to call them friends," Glidden said.

Never mind Glidden's cashier job at Toys R Us. He's set to study upper-level biology through July on the Murray campus of the University of Utah's High School University Program. He's got an internship in veterinary medicine at Taylorsville's VCA Animal Hospital. If there's still time, he could always brush up on his pre-calculus and statistics. A junior at the Academy for Math, Engineering & Science in Salt Lake City, Glidden's been pacing his talents through high-powered summer classes ever since he entered ninth grade.

"I'd get bored during the summer if I wasn't doing something like this," he said. So, too, would a lot of his classmates at the Academy. Mele Folaumoela and Sara Monserret, both 16-year-old sophomores, will attend a June "Bio-Innovations" gathering for young women at the U., then part ways when Folaumoela begins an internship at a local attorney's office and Monserret studies bassoon with a member of the New York Philharmonic at Snow College. Jonathan Brubaker, also a 16 year-old sophomore at the academy, will fill out three and a-half weeks of intense Mandarin Chinese study at Brigham Young University and book-end that with an internship in physical rehabilitation therapy.

High school brainiacs on the loose during summer isn't exactly a new phenomenon. The growing menu of courses, classes and programs on offered throughout Utah is, however. As bussing tables, babysitting and hanging out at the mall have fallen gradually out of fashion through the years, Utah colleges and universities have taken up the slack with gusto.

Restless summer students can take their pick, with most programs charging nominal fees. Salt Lake Community College's "Slick" summer science programs offer physics, mathematics and robotics programming to ages 11 through 17 in four sessions spanning the summer months. Utah State University in Logan beckons high school juniors and seniors with its Biotechnology Summer Academy, while the U.'s College of Engineering packs June and July full of engineering programs for young women, graphics and robotics camps for high school freshman and sophomores, and a summer day-camp in entertainment arts and engineering for juniors and seniors.

Educators have stressed for years the importance of flexing young minds between spring and fall, but it's only recently that education specialists have published studies affirming and measuring that loss. The newest research shows that two-thirds of the achievement gap for ninth-graders at opposite ends of the socio-economic spectrum can be directly attributed to unequal learning opportunities during the summer months, said Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University.

"When you shut off that faucet during the summer the results are real," Fairchild said. "It's one of those stories in education research we don't talk about a lot, and it doesn't always get the attention it deserves."



Future Bill Gates: A student in the AMES program, Carroll Glidden is taking classes this summer to advance his education. (Rick Egan/The Salt Lake Tribune)

Students at the Academy, a charter school renting space out of Cottonwood High School, don't worry consciously about learning loss so much as using summer months to discover their true interests.

Samuel Rivera, a 17-year-old junior, knows he could spend the summer working to save for college. Instead, though, he's headed to USU for chemical and biomedical engineering workshops, then shadowing doctors at IHC's Murray hospital.

"You'd think you'd be better off working, but you'd be wrong," Rivera said. "That time's better spent doing other things if you don't know yet what you want to do when you get to college."

Advanced summer school programs available

[By Ben Fulton](#)

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GREAT camp of "Graphics & Robotics Exploration with Amazing Technology" for 9th and 10th graders interested in computers and engineering. Sponsored in part by Novell and Omniture, classes will be held in two sessions, one coed June 16-27, and one for girls July 7-18. Classes for both sessions run 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Monday through Friday. Cost is \$250 with scholarships available. See

www.cs.utah.edu/camps/great/overview.shtml for more information. EAE "Entertainment and Arts

Engineering" summer program, June 9-20, for 11th and 12th graders interested in 3D animation and other

computer programs used in the entertainment industry. Cost is \$125. See www.cs.utah.edu/camps/eaeprogram

for more information. Summer Mathematics Program for High School Students, June 9-26. Eleventh and 12th-

graders with pre-calculus proficiency take on problems, puzzles and other math brain-teasers for three

university-level credits. Phone 585-9478 for more information.

For other summer learning opportunities at the U., consult www.smartkids.utah.edu and www.youth.utah.edu

Salt Lake Community College "Slick" summer science programs for students ages 11- 17 in four sessions: July

23-26, July 7-10, July 14-17 and July 28-31. Classes offer concentrations on physics, mathematics and robotics

programming. Cost is \$125 with a \$25 discount for early registrants. Phone 957-4827 for more information.

Utah State University, Logan

The Center for Integrated Biosystem's 2008 Biotechnology Summer Academy, July 7-11 for 11th and 12th

graders interested in sampling engineering fields in the life sciences. Cost is \$100. Phone 435-797-3504 for

more information.