

ITAG 2011 Administrator of the Year: Dr. Tim Taylor, Superintendent of Ames Community School District



The ITAG Board established the Administrator of the Year Award to recognize a school administrator whose leadership, commitment, and vision further the mission of ITAG and ensure high quality learning opportunities for gifted children. The board was pleased to receive nominees from teachers of gifted across the state. Several common themes permeated the letters of nomination: understanding the need to present gifted kids with challenge, believing in and supporting collaboration among teachers of gifted and general education teachers, giving teachers of gifted a place on district and building committees where the voice of gifted can be heard, and supporting the learning of the g/t teacher as well as ensuring that all teachers develop understanding of the ways to serve gifted children.

At the June ITAG Board meeting, members of the ITAG Board read the nomination letters and scored each against a rubric. The ITAG Board has the privilege of awarding the 2011 ITAG Administrator of the Year award to Dr. Tim Taylor, Superintendent of the Ames Community School District. He was nominated by Linda Telleen-Martens, ACSD ELP Coordinator.

According to Linda, Dr. Taylor exemplifies advocacy for the unique needs of talented and gifted learners through lobbying the Iowa State Legislature, implementing a new model for gifted education, guiding district leadership to grant more funding for ELP, facilitating learning for the ACSD Board of Education, helping elementary principals to develop scheduled time for collaborative planning, ensuring staff and space for ELP programming, as well as increasing opportunities for collaboration and cooperation among all of ACSD with the goal of advancing abilities and developing potential of TAG learners.

**Attend the 2011 ITAG Conference (October 17-18) at the Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines
to see Dr. Taylor receive his award and to hear him speak.**



Cutting Beyond the Edge:
New Realities in Gifted Education

Special Things are Happening at the 2011 ITAG Conference: *Cutting Beyond the Edge: New Realities in Gifted Education!* Reserve your seat and Register Early!

Monday, October 17, 2011

- * Administrators! Attend the special administrative strand designed especially for you.**
- * Teachers! Attend the special session about the Cognitive Process of Creative Thinking.**
- * Parents! Attend the special session geared for parents on Monday evening.**

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

- * Teachers and Technology Coordinators! Special Focus on *Technology of Tomorrow in the Classroom*, featuring Rockwell Collins.**

Please see the conference flyer and registration form on pages 8 and 9.



An affiliate of the National Association for Gifted Children

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THE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association is to recognize, support, and respect the unique and diverse needs of talented and gifted learners through advocacy, education, and networking.

THE ASSOCIATION

ITAG, an affiliate of the National Association for Gifted Children, is a tax exempt, 501C3 organization which was organized more than 25 years ago with a vision that gifted and talented children in the State of Iowa should receive an education commensurate with their abilities and needs. It promotes advocacy at the state and local level, pre-service and in-service training in gifted education, and parent/community awareness, education and involvement. ITAG is comprised of parents, educators, other professionals, and community leaders who share an interest in the growth and development of gifted and talented individuals in Iowa. ITAG annual membership dues are: Member, \$45; Friend, \$100-\$999; or Sponsor, \$1000 or more.

THE BOARD

Meets during the months of November, January, March, May, August, and during the Annual Conference in October. Interested persons are welcome to attend meetings. Please contact a Board Member for the date, time, and location of a meeting if you plan to attend.

THE ITAG NEWS

Is published in January, May, and September, by the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association, 5619 NW 86th St., Ste. 600, Johnston, Iowa 50131-2955. Please send mailing address corrections to this Johnston address. For information regarding content of ITAG NEWS and/or submission of articles and announcements, please contact: Matt Robie, ITAG NEWS Editor, 3116 SW Timberline Drive, Ankeny, Iowa 50023. e-mail: matt.robie@ankenyschools.org or itag@assoc-serv.com.

NOTE: Please submit articles and announcements as an e-mail attachment in Rich Text Format (RTF) or Generic Text Only. Questions: please contact Heather Paris at e-mail: heather@publicpersuasions.com or call 515-257-6306.

Please contact individual authors for permission to reprint their articles.

Permission to reprint non-author articles from the ITAG NEWS is given to local ITAG chapters and G/T organizations in other states. Please credit both the article and the ITAG NEWS and send two (2) copies of the reprint to Matt Robie, ITAG NEWS Editor, at 3116 SW Timberline Drive, Ankeny, Iowa 50023. The opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association.

ITAG does not endorse any specific perspective or methodology, but presents issues and articles that may be helpful in a variety of educational settings, and/or to many populations of gifted children.

ITAG Website

<http://www.iowatag.org>

Please send changes in the above information to Alda Helvey at ITAG@assoc-serv.com

You're receiving this issue of ITAG's Newsletter as a fresh new academic year is beginning to unfold. The hopes and promises of all that will become the 2011-2012 school year lie before us. As professionals who lay the foundation of gifted services in our districts, we can be stretched in so many directions: serving as a resource to administrators, counselors, and classroom colleagues; designing curriculum; advocating for our students; instructing students, sometimes in many buildings and at many levels; and other duties as assigned. :-) If you don't have an experienced ELP/TAG colleague in the district, I'd like to remind you of two resources that you can link to with help to get you started. One, of course, is our own Iowa Talented and Gifted Association website: www.iowatag.org. The other is either a link under our resources or can be found at its own site: www.nagc.org. On the National Association for Gifted Children site, you can reference **K-12 Programming Standards (nagc.org/index.aspx?id=546)** as well as **Teacher Knowledge and Skill Standards (nagc.org/index.aspx?id=5400)** that can serve as a guide for expectations, responsibilities, curriculum, and professional development for gifted personnel. And certainly feel free to contact any ITAG board member, whose e-mails are listed inside the front cover!

I have been attending ITAG's fall conference for over 20 years and I still get excited as the date gets closer. Its reputation as one of the premier state conferences for gifted educators is always a draw for national and regional experts, as well as talented local presenters. My attendance continues to rejuvenate and energize me so that when I return to work on Wednesday I'm charged up and ready to go! This year's theme, **Cutting Beyond the Edge: New Realities in Gifted Education** will focus on creativity. Now, I have to admit that my gifted classrooms are a little

heavy on academics and a little light on creativity, so I'm sure that I'll be out of my comfort zone in October. Nevertheless, it is where many of my students reside. ☺ And as gifted education goes, so follows "regular" curricular and instructional practices; when/as the pendulum swings away from testing and back to thinking, we need to be willing to use both sides of our brain. Let's become knowledgeable resources for our students and classroom colleagues with workable, creative tools to share from our teacher toolbox.

Part of each district's annual gifted budget should be used for professional development. If your district cannot allocate funds from there, then perhaps there are resources in the Teacher Quality account, which should also be used for professional development. We hope to see you at the Airport Holiday Inn October 17 & 18. You'll find registration information in this newsletter or check the website.

In 2009, the ITAG Board of Directors identified four goals/areas of service in which they wanted to strengthen presence in the state.

1. Assisting districts
2. Connecting with teacher prep programs
3. Supporting practitioners
4. Developing and maintaining a speaker's bureau
5. Legislative outreach (added this past spring)

Your elected board continues to work in these areas, but if you are interested or willing to help *we can use your input!* Please contact the ITAG office or a board member and we will put you in touch with your preferred group. Many hands make light work!

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What a quick two years it has been!! I thank you for the privilege of serving as your President. This experience has truly been a blessing in my life, as it has given me an outlet for my passion of serving Pre K-16 gifted learners and their families. I am confident that ITAG will continue to serve as a visionary resource for gifted professionals under Linda Moering's leadership. You have elected a very experienced and talented board of directors who will bring energy to each new challenge.

Speaking of pretty amazing colleagues, I hope you're thinking about educators, parents, and administrators you would like to nominate for future Distinguished Service Awards or Administrator of the Year Awards. The criteria and forms are always available on our website. Also continue to think about future nominations for the ITAG Board of Directors. I can think of very few more rewarding professional experiences that I've embraced, as I've worked with some pretty amazing colleagues on this board.

Thank you for all you do for Iowa's gifted kids!

By Diane Pratt, ITAG President

Attention Website News!

Does your district have a Gifted and Talented teacher/coordinator position you would like to advertise? Simply send us the link to the website on which that position is posted. We will then post your link on the new career opportunities page on our site.

When the position is filled, just remove it from your site as you normally would. The link to your human resources or career page will remain active on our site for 60 days from the date of the first posting.

A link to the career opportunities page can be found on the resources page of the ITAG website.

The job posting is a free membership benefit to ITAG Institutional Members.

***E-mail any announcements for the website to itag@assoc-serv.com, subject line: website news.**

ITAG Partners

PLEASE HELP!!! We are in need of experienced TAG/ELP educators who could serve as a mentor/partner with a less experienced colleague. This connection may be based on e-mail correspondence, but could develop into whatever relationship the two teachers decide.

We currently need experience at all instructional levels. Please consider guiding a new colleague in uncharted territory! E-mail Kenn Wathen, Educator Outreach, kwathen@hamburg.k12.ia.us if you would be willing to help.

Monthly ITAG Spotlight

Are you receiving the ITAG Spotlight on Gifted Education e-mail? If not, please e-mail your current contact information to the ITAG office at itag@assoc-serv.com.

In addition, please make sure that you add ITAG's e-mail address as an approved contact in your e-mail program's address book.

SENG

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted.

SENG is dedicated to fostering environments in which gifted adults and children, in all their diversity, understand and accept themselves and are understood, valued, nurtured, and supported by their families, schools, workplaces and communities.

Please visit their website at <http://www.sengifted.org/>

Candidates for ITAG Board

Use this link to vote: <http://survey.aea.k12.ia.us/survey/94194/9753/>

Voting will be open from August 18 - September 30, 2011. The link will close at 5:00 p.m. September 30th. Each computer will be accepted only once.

Please read the biographies and vote today!

Candidates for Board of Directors



Barbara Butler has been teaching gifted students in Sioux City for the past 19 years. Most of her experience has been at the middle school level; however, she has worked with students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Throughout the years with the Sioux City TAG Department, she has been involved with writing curriculum, developing Standards and Benchmarks, mentoring new TAG teachers, testing students, and designing TAG informational materials. In addition, she served on the State Accreditation Review Panel and the district TAG Review Committee. She received her BS from Iowa State University and her MA/Reading Specialist from Morningside College and has taken TAG classes from Drake University.



Board Member Claudia Koch has been involved in the field of gifted education for more than 25 years. She received a B.S. from Southern Illinois University in 1970 and an M.A. in Gifted Education from Western Illinois University in 1990. Claudia recently retired after serving for 18 years as the PreK-12 Gifted Coordinator at the West Bend-Mallard Community School District. She also served as the High School Gifted Coordinator for the Twin River Valley High School. Claudia is a member of NAGC, ITAG and Lakeland TAG, an ITAG Affiliate serving both gifted professionals and gifted children in North Central Iowa. She has held several offices in that organization. Claudia has also taught several gifted endorsement classes.



Linda Telleen Martens currently serves as the Talented and Gifted Coordinator for the Ames Community School District and is an Ames High School ELP instructor. In the last 12 years Linda has helped develop and implement a new ELP program for the Ames Community School District. Linda has been involved in the field of gifted education for the past 25 years. She facilitates gifted education staff development locally and for other school districts. Linda began the TAG program at Paton-Churdan and developed the secondary TAG program at Prairie Valley. While at Prairie Valley, Linda's students started one of the first student-based internet businesses serving several state organizations as well as local businesses. Linda has presented at numerous state conferences and serves on committees at the district and state level. Linda holds a Master's degree from Iowa State University with an emphasis in gifted education.



Board Member Matt Robie is a middle school talented and gifted teacher for the Ankeny Community School District, teaching gifted sixth and seventh graders at Prairie Ridge Middle School. He received his B.A. in Elementary Education from the University of Northern Iowa, and his Masters Degree in Education from Michigan State University. Matt holds endorsements in K-12 TAG, K-8 Reading, K-8 Science, and Coaching. Professional areas of interest include problem-based learning, academic acceleration, and the promotion of science and technology in elementary and middle

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school gifted education. Matt has served as an ITAG Board Member since 2007, and currently serves as editor of the ITAG News Magazine. He is also an instructor for Drake University, teaching Differentiated Instruction for Gifted Learners and Gifted Learners: Math Strategies as part of the TAG Endorsement program.



Felicia Twit has been a K-6 Extended Learning Program teacher in West Des Moines for the past 15 years. She currently facilitates gifted and talented programming at two elementary schools. She holds a Master's in Effective Teaching from Drake University and an Administrative Endorsement from Iowa State along with a TAG endorsement from University of Iowa. She participated in developing the framework for Heartland AEA's Gifted and Talented Academy. She is a consultant for Kendall Hunt Publishing and provides training to teachers around the U.S. on their gifted math curriculum: Project M3 and Project M2. She has presented at several ITAG conferences on Resources that Work and her Mentoring Program: Gifted Kids Mentoring Gifted Kids. Her focus is advocating for parents of gifted and gifted students. Felicia is a trained facilitator for the SENG model, teaching parenting classes in her area.



Board Member Doreen Underwood has been a Talented and Gifted (TAG) Facilitator in both elementary and intermediate schools in the Davenport Community School District (DCSD) for the past seven years. This summer her family relocated to Keokuk, Iowa where she teaches fifth grade in the Central Lee Community Schools. She received her Master of Arts degree in School Counseling with a gifted emphasis from the University of Iowa in 2010. Prior to working in the DCSD, she taught K-6 gifted students for 9 years in the Anamosa Community School District. During 6 of those years, she was also the program coordinator for the K-12 Extended Learning Program (ELP). Doreen received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from the University of Northern Iowa and received her TAG Endorsement from the University of Iowa. In the last 3 years on the ITAG board she has served as the assistant editor of the ITAG Newsletter. She has also presented on the affective needs of gifted learners at the 2004 and 2010 ITAG Conference. In December 2007, she had an article she co-authored published in the 2e Newsletter on Meeting the Affective and Academic Needs of Gifted Students with Asperger's Syndrome. In 2009 she served on a panel discussion for Twice Exceptional Students at the Wallace Symposium.

Please remember to use this link to vote: <http://survey.aea.k12.ia.us/survey/94194/9753/>.



What is happening in your classroom that you'd like to recognize in a future newsletter or e-mail spotlight? Email photos or recognitions to Matt Robie, ITAG Newsletter editor, at matt.robie@ankenyschools.org.

PRESENTING

THE ITAG Teaching Center & Learning

IOWA TALENTED AND GIFTED ASSOCIATION

www.k12tlc.net

Great Quality, Great Value – Just for ITAG Members!

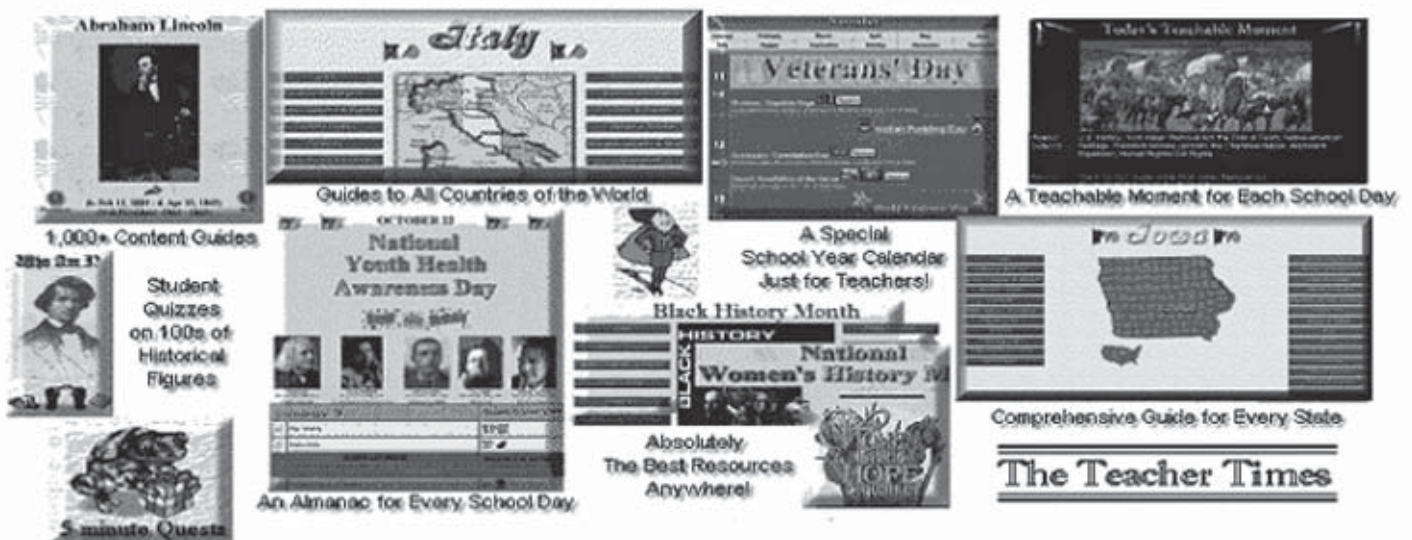
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- Much, much more!

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Want to know more? Go on line to www.k12tlc.net/itag.htm

Want to subscribe now? Go on line to [www.k12tlc.net/join/ia/italy.htm](http://www.k12tlc.net/join/ia/itag.htm)





Cutting Beyond the Edge:
New Realities in Gifted Education

Cutting Beyond the Edge: New Realities in Gifted Education

ITAG 2011 Conference
October 17-18, 2011

The ITAG 2011 Conference Committee eagerly invites you to join us for the 2011 ITAG State Conference!

October 17-18, 2011 at the Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines, Iowa

Cutting Beyond the Edge: New Realities in Gifted Education

As educators and advocates for gifted and talented students, can we envision a world in which the edge is dead, the box doesn't exist, and there is no ceiling to limit the potential of our gifted students?



Sally M. Reis

With a focus on creativity, we'll explore the roles of administrators, consultants, counselors, classroom teachers, teachers of the arts, and parents in gifted education from an exciting new perspective. We know that the challenges and opportunities that await our students will require creative thinking and unique skill sets. We know that their reality is beyond anything that we have currently experienced. Knowing this, it seems a daunting task to train and teach tomorrow's leaders, thinkers, and inventors; but that's our calling, our privilege, and our quest. At the 2011



David Williamson

ITAG Fall Conference, we will envision and explore this world beyond the edge of ours, cutting through what was and what is, to a future without limitations and false constraints. Come prepared



Dr. Clar Baldus

to be inspired by **Sally M. Reis** as she challenges us to purposefully embed creativity training within our gifted and talented programming, **David Williamson**, artist in residence to schools and businesses for over 35 years, and **Dr. Clar Baldus** whose instruction on creativity for both students and teachers will help us envision an environment infused with creativity. Come prepared to see the possibilities of a world in which students learn that "impossible" is negotiable and a ceiling to their talent is nowhere in sight. Dozens of our own Iowa educators and consultants will present and help us to build and bolster our own programs. Join us as we come together as a community to learn from each other and re-imagine the possibilities of instruction and programming to meet the needs of our gifted children!

Additional conference materials will be available this fall!

Please be sure to check our website at www.iowatag.org for further details.

2011 Registration Form



October 17-18, 2011 * Airport Holiday Inn * Des Moines, IA

Name _____
(Please print name as it should appear on nametag. Each person attending must complete a Registration Form)

Home address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____

School/Organization _____ Position _____

AEA # _____ E-mail _____

CONFERENCE FEES: (Please check appropriate box. Only ONE box in the CONFERENCE FEES section should be checked. Each option includes beverage breaks, continental breakfast and lunch Monday/Tuesday)

- TAG Teacher Full Conference – Monday and Tuesday _____ \$225
- TAG Teacher Monday Only _____ \$125
- TAG Teacher Tuesday Only _____ \$125

- Full-time College Student, Guest Artist or Legislator Full Conference – Monday and Tuesday _____ \$70
 - Full-time College Student, Guest Artist or Legislator Monday Only _____ \$35
 - Full-time College Student, Guest Artist or Legislator Tuesday Only _____ \$35
- If guest artist or legislator list the name of the teacher who invited you _____

- Special Invitation or Parent Full Conference – Monday and Tuesday _____ \$90
- Special Invitation or Parent Monday only _____ \$45
- Special Invitation or Parent Tuesday only _____ \$45

SPECIAL INVITATION: Content Area/Classroom Teachers, Principals, Curriculum Directors, Superintendents and Administrators can attend with a teacher who pays the conference registration fee.

If special invitation list the name of the teacher who invited you _____

ADDITIONAL FEES AND CREDITS:

- LATE REGISTRATION (**Postmarked after September 16, 2011**) _____ **ADD \$25**
- CREDIT (Board members, presenters and conference committee members apply credit. Anyone may bring an artist or legislator as a guest and apply credit also. Please mark applicable box.)
- Only one deduction is allowed.** _____ **SUBTRACT (\$25)**

- ITAG Board Member
- ITAG Presenter
- ITAG Conference Committee
- Bringing Guest Artist
- Bringing Legislator

TOTAL CONFERENCE FEE \$ _____

Mail Registration with Check payable to: ITAG, 200 W. 2nd Avenue, Indianola, IA 50125

Fax Registration with Purchase Order to: 1-866-442-6751

NOTE: If processing of PO is required a \$3.00 processing fee will be added to the invoice.
Please provide a separate PO number for EACH registration.

With questions please email: itag@assoc-serv.com



Gifted Programming that Begins in Kindergarten

What would happen if we had assessments that indicate what students can do at a preschool or kindergarten age? How would this change current thinking and identification system structures? What would happen if we had rubrics that identify objectives that are most predictive of school success? What if these rubrics provide a continuum of developmental behaviors so that our preschool and kindergarten teachers could collect ongoing assessment in the context of everyday experiences? The Teaching Strategies Gold, Objectives for Developmental Learning, previously called the Creative Curriculum is a tool that *might* help teachers and administrators of gifted programs identify gifted preschool and kindergarten children, so that we could provide the K-12 mandated programming with fewer delays.

Iowa Code requires that all public schools serve and provide programming for gifted students K-12. *The identification requirement of Chapter 12, Iowa Administrative Code gifted programming guideline states "valid and systematic procedures, including multiple selection criteria for identifying gifted and talented students from the total student population." There is no mandate or suggestion in Iowa Code or Administrative Rule that mentions the use of standardized assessments.* Waiting until assessment data is available for young children, such as through ITBS testing, promotes this late identification and programming dilemma. It is a myth that must be addressed. *Also, gifted programming funding is multiplied by the district's budget enrollment (district certified enrollment). Therefore, since funding comes from the K-12 enrollment, it is expected that programming also be available to the same grade levels.*

Service to gifted students is based on need. It is not elitist. It is not about worth. All students are worthy, however, not all students are gifted. Gifted students think and process in ways that other children do not. Their brains are wired differently. Because of this they learn very quickly, and many times they pick up skills on their own that other children need years of explicit instruction to be able to do. Because young gifted children have very specific needs, it is important that we find them as quickly as possible. To not do so is clearly a violation of Iowa Code.

What do we do when standardized testing is not an option? Let us rethink identification and think about the information that we do have. All students come to us with real life experiences. If we are creative in our thinking, and consistent in practice, we could use materials that are right in our rooms to help us "find" young gifted children. Purposely looking for students who learned to read on their own, have a love affair with patterns and numbers, and/or are obsessed with puzzles, blocks, (you name it) during their preschool and kindergarten years should give us all a reason to pause and take note. What would happen if we provided creativity or learning stations that provide opportunities that are **above and beyond** what is expected as the norm of the classroom? What if we used these stations as part of the pre-school and kindergarten roundup procedures and looked for students who could produce or show promise of producing at the **top** of the spectrum instead of only looking at the lowest level of proficiency?

As an instructor for the Gifted and Talented Endorsement Courses at Viterbo University, I have had the opportunity to meet several teachers that have asked these questions. As a result of action research on their part, and application of learning, they developed what *might* prove to be promising opportunities for identifying young gifted children. They found occasions to use real life documentation of student work to support an identification process. They developed opportunities that allow teachers to look for students who can produce above the mean, above what is expected from students at the preschool or kindergarten age. Martha Landsberg from Moulton-Udell developed "testing stations" that were used in very early September. These stations were developed to provide reading and math readiness information.

Description of Martha's Project Purpose of Project: Assessing Children's Learning

Through assessment, teachers obtain useful information about children's knowledge, skills, and progress by observing, documenting, analyzing and reviewing children's work.

These two testing stations will assist the TAG teacher in determining placement in the program. Assessment to support learning works best when it is linked closely to the

goals and objectives of your curriculum. The Creative Curriculum is used in the preschool class for The Moulton-Udell Community School District. The two stations used in the assessment below are going beyond that assessment and focus on the areas of Math and Reading Readiness. These stations are used after the preschool teacher has recommended some potential gifted students. The evaluator gives specific directions in each test.

Martha's Testing Station Directions (standardized procedure) for Students

Testing Station for Reading Readiness

Today, we are going to do some fun activities for reading and math. I want you to try your very best to answer the questions and finish each activity. Because I want you to do your best thinking, I cannot help you. We will begin with reading.

Please spell your name for me.

Name at least one word that begins with the following letters-

- B-**
- T-**
- D-**
- M-**
- R-**

For this next part we will use a little book. Look at the pictures for each story. They will help you figure out the words on the pages. This story is about Opposites. Here are some examples: Hot/Cold, Boy/Girl, Float/Sink. Can you think the word for the opposite of HAPPY? That's right! The answer is SAD. We will now begin to read the story called Polar Opposites.

*You may move on to another story if the child can read all the words in the first one. The story called The City is a good second story. Your student directions would be: The next story is called The City and is about things you would see in a city.

Scoring Procedure Developed for Reading Readiness Story-Polar Opposites

* Please check the one that applies:

Up and Down _____ Both words are correct
_____ Substitutions

Stop and Go _____ Both words are correct
_____ Substitutions

Big and Little _____ Both words are correct
_____ Substitutions

In and Out _____ Both words are correct
_____ Substitutions

Wet and Dry _____ Both words are correct
_____ Substitutions

Hot and Cold _____ Both words are correct
_____ Substitutions

Float and Sink _____ Both words are correct
_____ Substitutions

Old and New _____ Both words are correct
_____ Substitutions

Happy and Sad _____ Both words are correct
_____ Substitutions

Good Morning/Good Night _____ Both words are correct
_____ Substitutions

Testing Station for Math Readiness

You will be given three math activities using puzzles, shape pieces and cubes.

Activity 1: Look at the pattern on this card. Try to make a pattern, using the cubes, that's exactly like this one.

Activity 2: We will now do an activity using shape pieces. You need to place some of the pieces on the paper to make the candle.

Now, I would like you to match the shapes again but pretend you are looking in a mirror. It should look exactly the same but on the other side.

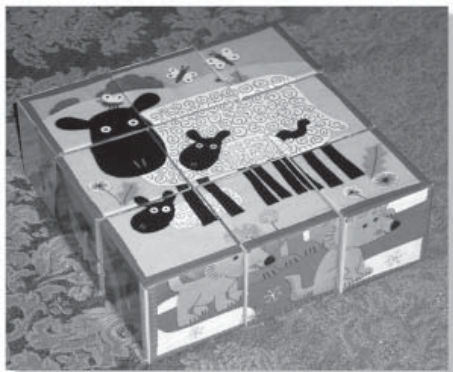
Our last activity, using the shape pieces, will be to completely cover the camel. See if you can do this without going outside the lines.

Activity 3: Puzzles can be a lot of fun!!! I would like you to put together a cube puzzle. This puzzle is really six puzzles in one so you need to choose your favorite color. Here are some pictures of completed puzzles that you

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can choose from. Remember, the color border needs to be around the edge of the puzzle. You may now begin.



Puzzle Blocks

Thank you so much for doing these activities for me!
Our fun math time is complete.

Resources used for "Readiness Tests" for the **Kindergarten Level:**

- Unifix Cubes-Choose colors to correspond with the card used and also add two other colors so child has to choose the correct colors to complete the activity.
- Pattern Blocks
- Farm, M, & Farm, D., Farm Cube Puzzle, Westport, Connecticut. MelissaAndDoug.com
- Gaydos, N. (2004). *Now I'm Reading: Pre-Reader: My World* (10 booklet binder). Norwalk, Connecticut. Innovative Kids. www.innovativekids.com
- Unifix Early Pattern Card Set 6, Rowley, Massachusetts.
- Didax Educational Resources. www.didax.com
- Patternables Activity Book, Vernon Hills, Ill. Learning Resources, p.10, 55, and 28. www.learningresources.com

As you can see, Martha provided many books or multiple levels of reading at the stations. Students were encouraged to explore and "read" the books. She provided this same open ended learning options for math, using puzzles that had multiple dimensions.

Teacher anecdotal records accompanied pictures of the students reading or working on the puzzles. This information along with Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS), and preschool teacher recommendation (based on the Creative Curriculum assessment for preschool) helped Martha to identify kindergarten

students who were ready for challenging text and thinking in comparison to their age-mate peers. With this early information she was able to meet with and provide programming for her kindergarten students *within the first quarter* of the kindergarten school year. This type of assessment allows us to identify needs. Gifted programming is all about finding children whose needs are above and beyond what the regular curriculum is providing. As soon as we identify the need, we can begin the programming.

Krystal Colbert from Southeast Polk questioned if she could identify some of the gifted children in her preschool classes. She researched The American Association for Gifted Children and found valuable information at their website. The AAGC website <http://www.aagc.org> contains a wealth of information, and some of it is specific to information supporting identification of gifted preschoolers. Krystal's research regarding ideas for preschool identification lead her to the very assessment tool that she already had access to as a teacher, the Creative Curriculum.

Krystal's Project

Purpose of the Project: Why Identify Gifted Preschool Students?

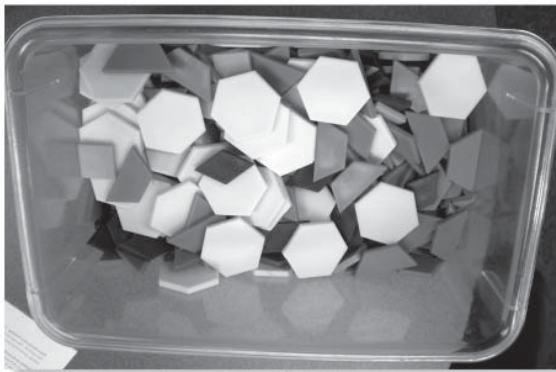
- There is a great amount of research and information regarding characteristics that gifted children possess, beginning at a very early age.
- However, many of these characteristics are unknown to teachers and administrators. Therefore, there is a lack of identifying gifted students at the preschool level. These gifted students are entering our school systems with little support by the district, and are often not getting their needs met until they are identified by standardized test scores, which often eliminate many gifted children.
- Many Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) preschool classroom educators focus on meeting the needs of their students with IEP's, and not necessarily on identifying children who need an advanced challenge.

Expanding "Identification"

- Develop a preschool math center that will help identify gifted students at SEP.
- Students will complete the activity during free choice center time, and it will be set up at the math center.



Animals



Shapes



Letter-associated Items

- Students will use manipulatives (letter-associated items, animals, and shapes) and sort and classify them into groups (their ideas). They will also “write” about an animal they have sorted.
- When students are sorting the manipulatives, a teacher will probe and observe.
- **How** are students sorting the materials?
- **Why** are students sorting the materials in that way?

Her Process:

- Teachers will take anecdotal notes when students are sorting. When possible, a tape recorder will be used.

- If needed, teachers will take pictures of the final products to be used in a child's portfolio.
- After students are done sorting, they will be asked to “write” about one animal they sorted. These can also be kept for their portfolios.

Krystal developed a standardized procedure: When Assessing:

1. Introduce students to the center. “Hello _____. Today you are going to do some sorting or grouping for me! Let's start with these animals.”
2. If needed, some students will need to “play” with the materials before they sort them if it is not a manipulative they have seen before (no longer than 2-3 minutes).
3. Students will sort the materials in their own way... no helping! See how imaginative they can get! Once students have sorted the materials one way, encourage them to sort in a different way (i.e. “I love the way you sorted (grouped) these animals by color. Is there another way you could sort (group) them?”). If they are unable to, move on to the next item to sort.
4. Student should sort (group) all three different items, while the teacher is observing, taking notes, and prompting for new ways to sort.
5. After students are done sorting all three manipulatives, have the student “write” about one animal they sorted. (i.e. “I love the way you were able to sort (group) these! Now I would like you to choose one animal that you sorted at the beginning, and write a story about it! You are a great storyteller, so I know your story will be wonderful. Let's start with your name first, and then you can draw your picture and any words/letters you want!” When student is done, collect all data samples and put in portfolio.

What Krystal was looking for:

Creative Curriculum goal number 27: Classifies Objects (ages 3-5)

- Level 1: Sorts objects by one property such as size, shape, color, or use
- Level 2: Sorts a group of objects by one property and then by another

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- Level 3: Sorts objects into groups/subgroups and can state reason
- Level 4: Anything above and beyond level 3; benchmark for end-of-the-year kindergarten: "students will be able to sort in various ways" (color, shape, size, and uses)

Creative Curriculum goal number 50: Writes letters and words (ages 3-5)

- Level 1: Uses scribble writing and letter-like forms
- Level 2: Writes recognizable letters, especially those in own name
- Level 3: Uses letters that represent sounds in writing words
- Level 4: Anything above and beyond level 3, such as writing simple sentences (kindergarten end-of-the-year benchmark)

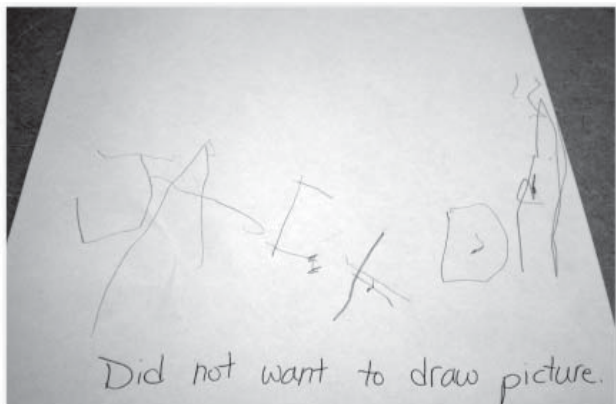
Excerpts from Creative Curriculum (2002)

Field Test:

Student "j" 3 years old

- General characteristics: off-task, trouble concentrating, not very vocal, knew most animal names and colors, knew 3 shapes, knew the letter S and it's sound, worked about 8 minutes
- Animal sorting: sorted by color (level 1)
- Shape sorting: sorted by color (level 1)
- Item sorting: sorted the items by color (level 1)
- Writing: wrote name, but did not want to "write" about any animals (level 2)
- Quotes: "I'm getting tired." "I'm going to do one more and then be done."

Writing sample:



Results: "J" is a "typical" preschool student. The activities and centers in the classroom will be enough to challenge and engage him.

Student "A" three years old

- General characteristics: happy, eager to work with me, interested in sorting, very talkative, prefers to be alone at centers, long attention span, knew all animal names, shapes, colors, and knew the letters P and S, and associated sounds, worked about 21 minutes before I stopped him.
- Animal sorting: sorted by color (level 1), sorted by animal group, and then again by swim/not swim, hooves/webbed feet (level 2), sorted by animal groups, and in those groups, sorted by babies/mommies (level 3)
- Shape sorting: sorted by color (level 1), and then by number of sides (level 2), also stated that if we had a shape with 8 sides, we could create an octagon group (level 4??), trapezoids and diamonds (level 3)
- Item sorting: sorted objects by outside/inside, and then by eat/not eat (level 3), and sorted objects by beginning sounds, (level 3 for goal #46), also told me more items that could be placed in those groups (level 4??)
- Writing: wrote name (level 2), plus also wrote the word "pig" to represent his picture (PI) (level 3), and the word "mud" (MUD) (level 3)
- Quotes: "I could make an octagon group and add a stop sign" (shape sorting). "There are 2 more in the yellow group than the red group. The blue group has the smallest" (animal sorting).

Writing Sample from "A"



Results: "A" could possibly be gifted. Although he is only 3, he is at level 3 (and beyond!) in most goal areas. His language skills are exceptional, and his ability to communicate with adults is way beyond peers. The teacher will need to provide extended learning opportunities and challenges for "A" so that he can continue to learn and grow, and not be stifled by the "typical" curriculum (i.e. one letter per week, and one shape and color per month).

- The teacher will need to continue to observe "A" for other signs of giftedness, and record these observations for his portfolio.

Krystal's Conclusions:

- As you can see, one simple preschool activity can help to begin identifying gifted students! Although this center would not be used singly as a way to identify gifted preschoolers, it is an opportunity for students to show their abilities.
- It's important for all educators to be aware of the different types of giftedness, and characteristics associated with gifted children.
- As an educator, it is my job to provide ALL students with a challenging and engaging curriculum that will help foster their unique abilities.

Like Martha, Krystal realized that if she could collect this information during pre-school, the gifted students could *begin the kindergarten year* with appropriate service. For children who begin kindergarten with no preschool, documentation of life experiences and assessment using the rubrics (from the Creative Curriculum) could take part during the first several weeks of school. Service to these kindergarten students could then begin within the first 9 weeks of school.

This article is not an advertisement for the Creative Curriculum. This article is meant to help teachers think about what they already have access to that has validity and reliability. The rubric provided in the Creative Curriculum is leveled 1-9 with descriptors for each level. Strategies are provided that give detailed information about what each of these objectives might look like at the various levels. The strategies include classroom activities that go "beyond what is expected of the typical kindergarten student. Examples: for objective, Cognitive Development: Guide preschool and older children in doing in-depth, long-term, and open-ended studies and explorations."

Examples for objective: Uses scientific inquiry skills: "Support kindergarten children as they record their scientific predictions and observations in their science notebooks or journals. For example, they might predict what will happen over time to the pumpkin they picked from their garden, how tall the tomato plant will grow, or what will dissolve in water. Children can record their observations using a digital camera, drawings, and/or writing and then report and discuss their findings."

This type of information could be a portion of the required multiple measures for identification. The Creative Curriculum assessment rubric along with real life experiences and parent nomination are examples of what could/might be used for identification of gifted children at the preschool or kindergarten level. As we consider information that is readily available to us, we must keep in mind that different students will blossom at different times. As Dr. Marcia Gentry cautioned us at the 2010 ITAG Fall State Conference, we must be careful to never have identification be the "gifted bus" that comes into town and never comes back again. George Betts reminds us to throw the net wide and allow opportunities for giftedness to emerge and show itself. In order for this to happen, we should be looking for indicators of giftedness and providing programming to support this potential throughout the K-12 years, allowing those who emerge at any point access along the way.

With our young gifted students, maybe programming consists of talent pool opportunities, subject area grade skips, or whole grade skips. The options for programming are many, enrichment meeting the least of the needs. Why? Because ALL students benefit from enrichment. Why are we so concerned about providing students who have learned on their own, who can do things that take years of explicit instruction for other to learn, the opportunity to explore new possibilities, read books at a level that challenge them, do multiplication or maybe even algebraic thinking in kindergarten? We can no longer use the excuse that they are not identified. Knowing that we have multiple means of identification right in front of us, we need to find ways to identify and provide programming options that are specific to the educational needs that gifted students have. It's the law.

The American Association for Gifted Children, <http://www.aagc.org>

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Heroman, C, Burts, D., Berke, K. & Bickart, T. -2002. Creative Curriculum. Teaching Strategies, Inc.

Iowa Code 257.44 Gifted and talented children defined, 89 Acts, ch 135, & 44.

Iowa Code 256.11 Educational Standards. Iowa Administrative Code, Chapter 12, General Accreditation Standards, July 1999. 12.5(12) *Provisions for gifted and talented students.*

Iowa Code Chapter 257, Financing School Programs. 257.46 *Funding.*

Iowa Code 281— Chapter 98, Financial Management of Categorical Funding, Division II, Appropriate Use of Budgetary Allocations. 98.20(257) *Gifted and talented program.*

Linda Moehring, ITAG President-Elect
Including contributing work of
Martha Landsberg and Krystal Colbert

Common Gifted Education Myths

For decades, myths related to gifted education have had detrimental effects on providing quality instruction for our nation's high-ability learners. These myths have affected every facet of the field, and in turn have distorted the perception of not only what gifted students need in the classroom but also what they can offer the nation now and into the future.

NAGC has compiled a list of the most prevalent myths in gifted education, complete with supporting links with evidence explaining why the myth is untrue. The information that NAGC presents will provide Iowa educators with the arguments and facts needed to rebut, and hopefully dispel, these myths. For additional myths, visit www.nagc.org/commonmyths.aspx.

Myth: Gifted students don't need help; they'll do fine on their own

Would you send a star athlete to train for the Olympics without a coach? Gifted students need guidance

from well-trained teachers who challenge and support them in order to fully develop their abilities. Many gifted students may be so far ahead of their same-age peers that they know more than half of the grade-level curriculum before the school year begins. Their resulting boredom and frustration can lead to low achievement, despondency, or unhealthy work habits. The role of the teacher is crucial for spotting and nurturing talents in school.

Myth: Gifted Students Make Everyone Else in the Class Smarter by Providing A Role Model or A Challenge

Truth: Like most of us, students are generally more comfortable around others who are similar to themselves. Average students often feel uncomfortable taking on a challenge in the presence of gifted students who already seem to "get it." Average students are more likely to be motivated by the successes of like students than they are by their gifted classmates. Studies show that working with intellectual peers at school increases ability, performance, and comfort for the entire spectrum of student achievement and ability. The positive benefits of grouping by ability for instruction have been demonstrated in a variety of research studies. Results show increased achievement scores for all groups of students. The word "grouping," does not connote "tracking" and should be instead thought of as a flexible strategy with grouping decisions being made for various projects and subjects

Myth: That Student Can't be Gifted; He's Receiving Poor Grades

Gifted students, just as any others, may underachieve. There are a number of reasons for why a student may be underachieving including a lack of motivation, lack of resources, learning disabilities, and social, economic, or psychological pressures. Regardless of why a gifted student may be underachieving, or to what extent he/she is underachieving, the child is still gifted, meaning he or she has the potential, based on a range of assessments, to achieve at high levels. Like others, high-ability students need to be motivated and taught in an appropriate manner suited to their needs so that they can reach their maximum potential.



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 www.nagc.org
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