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ITAG- Furthering the Education of Iowa's Talented and Gifted

ITAG NEWS MAGAZINE

IS ONE OF THE TANGIBLE BENEFITS OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE

IOWA TALENTED AND GIFTED ASSOCIATION

In our **NEWS** magazine, we include: legislative updates; national and state conference information; news about programs and events of interest to gifted students, their parents, and teachers; articles for educators and parents about issues in gifted education; as well as reprints of material from state and national journals that may be of specific interest to gifted education advocates.

WE INVITE YOU

to submit suggestions, concerns, and/or articles you have written or read which you would like to share with the ITAG membership through **ITAG NEWS**.

PLEASE SEND your NEWS magazine suggestions, articles, or announcements to: the ITAG office

ITAG NEWS

5619 NW 86th St., Ste. 600
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or E-Mail: itag@assoc-serv.com

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Dominant Culture and Identification: Implications for the Classroom

Variables responsible for the under-representation of specific student groups in gifted and talented student programs across the nation are complex and multi-faceted. In the age of accountability initiated by the No Child Left Behind Education Act (NCLB) of 2001, pressured educators focus on student populations that struggle with the general curriculum (Manning, 2005). Ironically, students from these populations, along with those from the often called "dominant" culture suffer from classroom teaching practices that have evolved as educators attempt to cope with increasing measures to ensure accountability. This new age of accountability has tripped the survival switch in the minds of many teachers resulting in choice and challenge for none and an increase in the number of students left behind. Sadly these include those that should be leading the way.

Issues Relating to Under-Representation

Educational statistics and gifted education literature document the disproportional representation of various population groups in our nation's gifted and talented programs (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2006; Oakland & Rossen, 2005; VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2007). Specifically, Asian students represent 4.5 percent of the total K-12 public school population but comprise 11.1 percent of those identified as gifted and talented. The common notion that White, non-Hispanic students are over-represented in gifted education programs may be countered by statistics. These students represent 58.4 percent of the total public school population, but comprise 7.8 percent of those identified as gifted. Native American students are enrolled in the U.S. public schools at a rate of 1.2 %; however, these student account for 4.9% of those students identified as gifted and talented (NCES, 2006).

The student groups most woefully under-represented in gifted education programs are Black and Hispanic students. These groups represent 17.1 and 18.8 percent of the total K-12 public school population respectively. In gifted programs they are served at a discouraging rate of 3.1 and 3.7 percent. Aside from distinct racial and ethnic group under-representation factors, another important issue has surfaced which cuts across these lines. This issue is poverty. Students of low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds are less likely to be identified as gifted and consequently may collectively be our most underserved group in gifted education (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2007).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), almost one-fifth of children between the ages of five and 17 in the United States live in poverty (2006). United States census reports reveal that median incomes are the lowest for Black and Hispanic families — those groups most under-represented in gifted education programs nationally (U. S. Census Bureau, 2007). This might lead one to hypothesize that a correlation exists between childhood poverty and the under-representation of Blacks and Hispanics in gifted education programs. While research has shown that children in these cultural groups are at a higher risk for childhood poverty, no population group is exempt from poverty (Kitano, 2007). We do know, however, that these groups are not being proportionally served in gifted education programs. Table 1 (below) gives a synopsis of the data.

Racial/Ethnic Background	Percentage of Total K-12 Public School Population	Percentage Identified and Served in Gifted Education Programs	Median Income of Households
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.5	11.1	\$57,518
American Indian/Native Alaskan	1.2	4.9	n/a
Black, non-Hispanic	17.1	3.1	\$30,134
Hispanic	18.8	3.7	\$34,231
White, non Hispanic	58.4	7.8	\$48,977



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THE MISSION STATEMENT

THE MISSION OF ITAG IS TO ADVOCATE FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS AND THE PROVISIONS OF APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS.

THE ASSOCIATION

ITAG, an affiliate of the National Association for Gifted Children, is a tax exempt, 501(c)3 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

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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: **ITAG@assoc-serv.com** or call 515-225-2323.

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 **Jean Johnson, ITAG NEWS Editor**, at 5207 Wellington Court, Sioux City, IA, 51106. 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.

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ITAG wishes all of our members
a happy and beautiful Labor Day!

*The Iowa Talented and
Gifted Association Board
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announces these*

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Congratulations

*Congratulations to the following
winners at our drawings at the
Governor's AP Conference, and
at the SAI Conference.*

*At the Governor's AP Conference,
the following won attendance to the
2008 Conference Counselor's Strand
on October 6: Lori DeBoer, Waterloo,
IA and Stacey Snyder, Tripoli, IA.*

*At the SAI Conference, the
following won attendance to the 2008
Conference Administrator's Strand
on October 6: Ned Sellers, West
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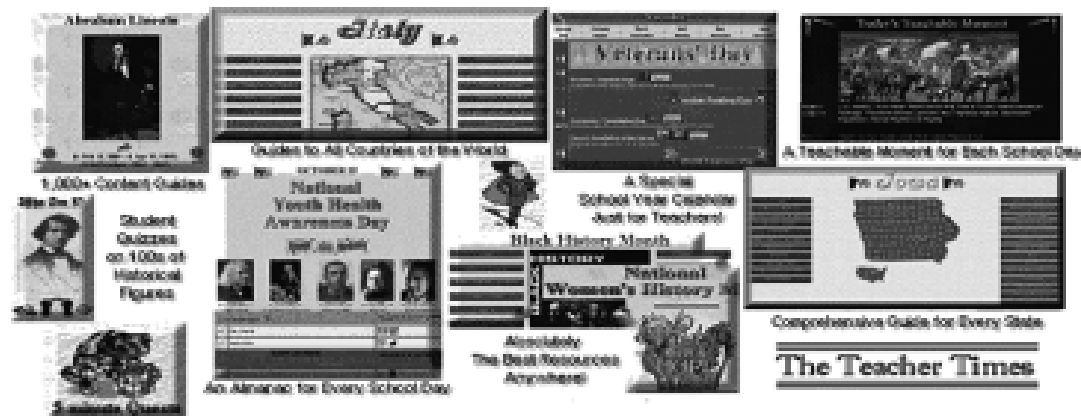
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From the President



Isn't it amazing where summer has gone! As you gear up for the new school year, be sure to include attending the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association Annual Conference in your plans. Co-chairs Linda Moehring and Chris Schultz have assembled a quality lineup of keynoters and session presenters. There is more information about the conference in this newsletter issue and on the ITAG Web site at <http://www.iowatag.org>. Encourage your administrators and counselors to get in on the learning at the conference by attending the strands developed especially for them.

As most of you know, during the last legislative session the Iowa Core Curriculum became law. This will ensure that all children in Iowa have access to a set of core competencies designed to prepare each child to participate in a global society. Get involved with your school's discussions around the Iowa Core Curriculum. The Department of Education, in cooperation with AEAs, is developing capacity-building opportunities for the 08-09 school year focused on school leaders. The intent is to roll out training state wide so that each school, no matter how large or small, regardless of location has access to the same high levels of support when implementing the Iowa Core. For information about the Iowa Core Curriculum visit the Iowa Department of Education Web site at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/674/1249/>.

2008 is an election year! OK, maybe the ITAG Board election isn't getting the same press as the Presidential election, but your vote is still important! Please carefully read the bios in this newsletter and make your selections for president-

elect and board members. These are the people who will represent you and help guide the organization into the future.

The start of each new school year always makes me think, "OK. Now I have the chance to make something better for kids and teachers!" Maybe it's an idea to make programming a better match to the child. Perhaps it's an inspiration that will enhance collaboration with colleagues. It could be bringing more general education teachers "on board" through professional development opportunities. What's your goal? Become (or continue to be) a leader in your school. "Do something great in '08!"

By ITAG President Mary Schmidt

ITAG Partners

PLEASE HELP!!! We are still 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 Diane Pratt, Educator Outreach, dpratt@fort-dodge.k12.ia.us if you would be willing to help.

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Educational Issues Related to Poverty

Children in poverty are not often privy to the early experiences that have been shown to lay the foundation for school learning (Bredenkamp & Copple, 1997). Research confirms that the first three years of life create the blueprint for future learning both academically and emotionally (Goleman, 1997; Hodgkinson, 2007). Children deprived of early experiences rich in substantive nurturing begin their formal educational careers at a disadvantage. According to Hodgkinson, children from low SES households own fewer books, are read to less often, are exposed to fewer outside activities (i.e., art/dance classes, trips), spend more time watching television, and live in more transient family situations. These factors combine to put the potentially gifted, but economically disadvantaged child behind his or her more advantaged peers from the start.

Recruitment Issues

Many have asserted that identification practices for gifted students are biased toward the dominant culture in our society (Ford & Harris, 1990; 2007; Worrell, 2007). Given the statistics on children of poverty in our country, a new definition for "dominant culture" may be in order. Rather than the dominant culture representing white America; one might consider the notion that the dominant culture represents those Americans with the resources to provide their children with educationally rich experiences. Given that low SES groups include two prominent minority populations this may explain their under-representation in gifted education programs. (Cline & Schwartz, 1999; Florey & Tafoya, 1988; VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2007).

Many states depend on teacher referrals as the initial step for recruitment in gifted education programs (Oakland & Rossen, 2005). General educator bias may blind teachers to the gifted potential of students from low socio-economic situations. Because many teachers' dominant culture belief systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) guide their assumptions of their students, they may hold erroneous expectations of what constitutes gifted behavior. This concept in concert with the added pressure of current federal policy on general education teachers to "teach to the test" (Moon, Brighton, & Callahan, 2002; Tomlinson, 2002) may lead to teacher dispositions that reflect automaticity rather than the informed practice and dispositions developed as part of their teacher education programs.

Student Characteristics

Students from culturally diverse and low SES populations rarely exhibit the "teacher friendly" characteristics commonly expected of gifted students. It is incumbent upon educators to be knowledgeable of the characteristics of giftedness most often displayed by students from culturally non-dominant backgrounds. Knowing these may help insure disadvantaged children are recruited for gifted programs based on their unique capabilities.

According to Goff and Torrance (1999), many economically disadvantaged youth possess "creative positives" (p.16) which should be embraced by teachers working with these students. These include strong expression of feelings and emotions; ability to improvise with common items; skill in role-play and story-telling; enjoyment of group activities; originality; responsiveness to the concrete; a kinesthetic learning style; enjoyment of visual arts, music, and creative movement; a sense of humor, persistence in problem solving, and expressive speech. A checklist of the most common characteristics of gifted minority and disadvantaged student groups follows:

- Students can think logically.
- Students can use stored knowledge to solve problems.
- Students are able to reason by analogy.
- Students can transfer knowledge to new circumstances.
- Students often have creative and artistic abilities.
- Students are resilient; able to cope with dysfunctional families.
- Students can take on adult roles in the home.
- Students have a strong sense of pride and self-worth.
- Students exhibit leadership ability and independent thinking.
- Students have strong desire to learn about and understand their culture.
- Students display a strong inner will.
- Students display a heightened sensitivity to others and the world around them. (Bonner II, 2000; Herbert, 1999; Schwartz, 1997).

Educators of low SES student populations should be aware of these characteristics in order to focus on them positively. This focus may help students understand who they are as gifted individuals and lead to a positive self-image. It can also help make learning more meaningful for them. Additionally, Goff and Torrance (1999) suggest that as teachers embrace "non-traditional" characteristics of gifted behavior they may develop an understanding of their own personal prejudices, an ability to

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The National Association for Gifted Children is pleased to offer all parent members of the Iowa Gifted and Talented Association a Parent Associate Membership for \$10. Your membership affords you four (4) issues of Parenting for High Potential (PHP), NAGC's full-color, award-winning quarterly magazine and access to all resources on NAGC's website, www.nagc.org.

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MEMBERSHIP

FULL MEMBERSHIP* INCLUDES: Magazine of your choice: *The Gifted Child Quarterly* (GCQ) or *Parenting for High Potential* (PHP). In addition, you receive *Compass Points* newsletter, a discount on materials, discounted Annual Convention registration, and a free information service. For an additional fee, you may receive **both** magazines. (Please note: *Institutional Membership* includes a discount for only one (1) attendee at the NAGC Annual Convention.)

*A *Parent Associate* Membership is available to parents and grandparents ONLY. This limited membership category is available to assist families who are interested in receiving *Parenting for High Potential* magazine, but otherwise cannot buy a full membership. **Home address is required for this category. No purchase orders are accepted - personal check or credit card only.**

DIVISIONS: All members may join any or all of the NAGC Divisions and participate with colleagues on issues of special interest to you. Division membership costs \$10 per Division per year.

Dominant Culture Con't



accept personal imperfections in themselves and their students, an interest in people for their own sake and a vitality and joy for living that causes appreciation for these students' gifts.

Staff development and programs to educate teachers and administrators can play a major role in equipping educators in the specific skills needed for recognizing giftedness among low SES students (Berger, 1990). Additionally, knowledge of these characteristics may help educators build learning relationships with their students. The same resilience that we observe in students of promise among the under-represented and potentially gifted is needed in those who are on the front lines referring students for gifted and talented programs.

The goal of gifted education is to identify and serve all those who need special services beyond what the general education classroom can provide. We must acknowledge that the general educator, despite being on the front line for identification of these students, is not always able to do so effectively. Concomitant factors of accountability and student production on state tests are tangible realities that classroom teachers will not overcome in the quest for identification and service of *all* gifted students without the development of new understandings. Substantive collaboration between gifted and general educators must become a priority.

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Time to Start Planning for the 2009 Letters About Literature Contest

Entries must be postmarked by December 6, 2008

For many teachers across Iowa, the Letters About Literature (LAL) Contest has become part of their annual lesson plans. And they've had students who benefited from the challenges of writing to an author whose book has changed their views of themselves or the world.

Readers respond to the book they've read by exploring the personal relationship between themselves, the author and the book's characters and themes.

There are three competition levels:

- Level I: grades 4-6
- Level II: grades 7-8
- Level III: grades 9-12

Teachers' guides are available at www.iowacenterforthebook.org/letters. Members of the Iowa LAL Committee developed a

document showing how LAL supports the principles and standards of the Iowa Model Core Curriculum, the standards of the International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English, and the standards and benchmarks of the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

In 2008, there were 1,394 entries from Iowa students. Thirty-seven were semifinalists in Level I, 38 in Level II and 26 in Level III. Iowa had two national winners. Prizes are awarded at the state and national levels.

For more information, visit the Web site listed above, or contact the coordinator of the Iowa Center for the Book at (515) 281-4105 or coordinator@iowacenterforthebook.org.

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About the Author

Sandee Manning, Ph.D., NBCT, is an assistant professor of Special Education in the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Her current teaching responsibilities

include the areas of classroom management and student assessment. She recently co-authored a book chapter with Dr. Kevin Besnoy on Special Populations of Gifted Students in *Achieving Excellence: Educating the Gifted and Talented* (Karnes & Stephens, in press with Prufrock). Dr. Manning's research interests include collaboration, assessment, and giftedness in early childhood. She may be reached at sandra.manning@usm.edu.

By Sandee Manning, Ph.D., NBCT
Permission to reprint this article was granted by the author. This article appeared in the Virginia Association for the Gifted Newsletter Volume 29, Number 1 Fall 2007 issue on pages 1-3.



Iowa Governor's Conference on Advanced Placement: the Perspective of an Administrator

Seven years ago, Nevada High School decided we needed to jump into the deep end of the pool and start offering more rigorous courses for our students. Advanced Placement courses were introduced to our student body, Honors courses were added for our younger students, and we have continued down the rigor experiential road ever since. We get what we expect and obviously before this time Nevada High School was probably underestimating what our students should be doing. Since that time we have continually looked for ways to increase the opportunities for more rigorous experiences. Advanced Placement courses play a major role in our strategies. Keep in mind that AP courses are not about the college credit student might earn. They are not about earning a score of 3, 4 or 5 on the May AP tests. The courses are about the rigorous experience that will help prepare students for college academics.

So we fast forward to the Governor's First Annual Advanced Placement Conference. For me personally, it was a bittersweet experience. Speaker after great speaker talked about their personal experience working with students. Themes I heard included: Expect more of your students; Reach out and inspire students to do more; It's not about the credits, it is about the rigorous experience; Don't

discriminate your subgroups such as socio-economic students; Earning a C in an AP course is more beneficial than students earning higher grades in less rigorous courses; High school experiences open whatever doors of opportunity are going to happen at the next level, and the themes went on and on. I was so excited that I wanted to get our high school people together right away to think of ways we can improve curriculum for our kids. I can hardly wait for next year's conference.

I also felt a sense of disappointment because of the lack of attendance. Here we have the Governor of Iowa, the Department of Education and the Belin-Blank Center providing a first class conference that costs school districts nothing to attend. Yet many school districts were not present. Of those school districts present many high school principals were not part of the team in attendance. All high schools in Iowa need to analyze what we are doing and continue to look for ways to get better. This conference was fantastic.

I'm hoping other conference attendees get the word out and we all do a better job attending the next Advanced Placement conference in 2009.

By Ray Murray, Principal, Nevada High School

Announcements

For more information on the Conference Keynote Speakers, visit the ITAG Website. Watch your school mail for the 2008 ITAG Conference brochure.

Rule changes on the TAG Endorsement have recently been adopted by the Board of Educational Examiners. Watch for information regarding the new rule in the next issue of the ITAG News Magazine. TAG Endorsement programs in Iowa will also be highlighted.

Iowa Governor's Conference on Advanced Placement: the Perspective of an Educator in the Field of Gifted

As a teacher of gifted students and coordinator of gifted programming, I was very excited to attend the first Iowa Governor's Conference on Advanced Placement. I was anxious to hear the message and I really wondered who would be sitting in the audience listening. As I walked into the conference, I was excited to see teachers of gifted, counselors, principals, parents, and even superintendents! It was great! The promoters of this conference had reached a broad demographic, which is exactly what needs to happen to educate the masses about the needs of our brightest students.

One of the speakers, Dr. Joyce Elliott, was truly dynamic. Her message was simple: We must "democratize rigor in all of our schools!" Rigorous courses like AP courses must be available to ALL students; all students must be encouraged to challenge themselves, and all teachers need to step up to the task of finding diamonds in the rough. It's not enough to educate all kids; we must expect ALL students to learn at a higher level or we're doing them a disservice. If we, as educators, don't help students realize and capitalize on their potential, it could be tragic. Our world could be missing out on the scientist who could cure cancer, the engineer who could solve our energy-dependency problems, even the brilliant mind who could figure out how to balance a school's budget without cutting programs or teachers or having a bake sale.

Another aspect discussed at the conference addressed how colleges look at AP courses, grades, and scores for students applying for admission or scholarships. It was awesome to hear the admission advisors say that they definitely consider any and all AP courses to be important. As one said, "AP trumps it all." When students have AP credits on their transcripts, colleges know that they have successfully completed a rigorous, college-level course because the standards for all AP courses are similar. There's no guess work regarding rigor. They have successfully completed a college course. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of all community college credits.

This conference was validation for professionals in the field of gifted education. My sincere hope is that it was an eye-opener for those outside of our field. Teachers, parents, administrators, and students all need to understand the importance of AP coursework. Every student in Iowa deserves to learn new material every year and be encouraged and challenged to excel above and beyond where they start. They deserve the rigor of AP. Kudos to the governor for his recognition and commitment. I look forward to the continuation of this dialog.

By Jolene Teske, ITAG Board Member

A Challenge for Culturally Diverse Families of Gifted Children: Forced Choices Between Achievement or Affiliation

I have enjoyed having my son and daughter in the inner-city elementary schools, and they were quite successful, but I chose different options for middle/high schools. I know there are stereotypes about all schools, but what I don't seem to be able to answer is "What are my options?" These are my perceptions. On one hand, if I say, okay, we'll stay in the inner city, then we have the issue of "acting White" when a student (my son/daughter) is a minority and does well academically because of stereotypes about minority students, especially African American students. On the other hand, we have the issue of isolation when a minority student is in a predominantly White gifted program. . . . I apologize for this lengthy e-mail, but I just feel so lost . . .

— e-mail from a concerned African American mother, April 17, 2004

In the Meantime

Parents and educators must recognize that culturally diverse students are gifted and culturally diverse. Like gifted students, they need to have their abilities recognized and they need to be challenged. Like diverse students, they need to have their culture (e.g., values, traditions, customs, etc.) acknowledged, respected, and otherwise affirmed. Abraham Maslow taught us that, in order to reach our full potential, we must have our basic needs met. This includes the need for safety, belonging, identity, and esteem. For diverse gifted children to develop optimally, they must be challenged and appreciated.

Although gifted programs are not as diverse as I would like and as culturally diverse students and parents would wish, my initial preference is for diverse parents to keep their children enrolled in challenging programs, even if there are few diverse students. In the long run, students will benefit academically and professionally from taking such classes. However, diverse parents will have to compensate for this lack of diversity. Here are a few suggestions:

- Be involved as much as possible in your child's school and classroom; volunteer as often as possible.
- Be an advocate for your child; share your concerns with school personnel.
- Work with school teachers, counselors and administrators to provide a safe and culturally responsive learning environment. Share ideas and suggestions with school personnel about making the school and classrooms nurturing for diverse students.
- Work with teachers to develop multicultural activities, programs, and curricula.
- Join the parent-teacher organization as a way to advocate further for your child. Help to develop social activities for all students to work together and to get to know each other (The less we know about each other, the more we

I frequently receive e-mails and calls from African American and Hispanic American parents, often mothers, who are torn between the need to meet the academic needs of their children and their social/emotional needs. While these parents want their children to be challenged academically, they also want them to be happy, to fit in socially, and to have friends.

Many culturally diverse parents are frustrated because they cannot find gifted education programs that are culturally diverse.

Until gifted programs become more racially and culturally diverse, this issue and related concerns will continue. My heart goes out to diverse children and their families. As an African American parent, I share this concern. And, having been identified as gifted as a child, I share the concerns of other gifted diverse children, specifically the desire to have friends without sacrificing achievement.

My mother recently recalled how unhappy I was as a 10th-grade student at a private high school for girls, only five of whom were culturally diverse. I was depressed, frustrated, and confused. While I can vividly recall being miserable in the private school, I was also "losing my identity," according to my mother. That was a tough pill to swallow. I did not seem to belong at the school because I was "different."

Teenagers in my neighborhood often teased me, charging me with "acting White." I was "different" from them, too. That was 1976. The above e-mail is from 2004, some 28 years later. Yet, the mother's concerns echo those of my mother; the students' concerns are similar to my concerns.

Although 60 years have passed since Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) legally ended segregation in school settings, schools are now more segregated than ever before, including their gifted programs. Until gifted programs become more racially and culturally diverse, what can diverse parents do to meet both the academic and affective needs of their children?

Continued on page 8



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!

NAGC'S 2008 Annual Convention
October 29 - November 2, 2008
Tampa, Florida

Growing Gifted in The Sunshine State!

Visit <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=2692> for more information.

Continued from page 7

make up.). This organization can also support meetings and workshops that focus on all school members becoming culturally sensitive, aware, and competent.

- Start a parent/family organization for gifted students and encourage diverse parents to participate as members and leaders.
- Involve your child in activities and organizations where members are diverse. Students have a life outside of school where their cultural needs can also be met.
- Encourage school administrators to hire a diverse staff, including teachers and counselors.
- Work with schools and organizations to find your child a mentor (e.g., former student, college student, business person). Ideally, the mentor should share your child's interests and background; this often increases their bonding.
- Be open and honest with your child about the existence and persistence of prejudice and discrimination. With this knowledge, your child is less likely to internalize negative information from others about him or herself and diverse groups.

Beyond the School Walls

Clearly, parents want their children to be happy while in school. Although students spend a considerable amount of time in school, they also have a life outside its walls. Therefore, parents can structure out-of-school experiences that help to nurture their children's cultural identities and social/emotional well-being. In their own right, the following suggestions have the ultimate goal of promoting racial pride in children. My personal and professional experiences have convinced me that diverse children who have strong, positive racial identities are more likely to achieve and be resilient in the face of adversity (e.g., discrimination, peer pressure) than children who are lost, confused, and ambivalent. Perhaps Eleanor Roosevelt captured this notion best with her statement, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." Some suggestions:

- Involve your children in organizations that are both diverse and achievement-oriented.
- Let your child attend and participate in cultural events.
- Visit historically Black colleges and universities so that your child can see successful diverse students in an academic setting; this image also shows that there is life after K-12 schooling.

- If possible, live in a diverse community.
- Read books with your child about culturally diverse students who are gifted (e.g., *Maizon at Blue Hill*; *Fast Talk on a Slow Track*; *Yolanda's Genius*; *Don't Say Ain't*; *A Hope in the Unseen*). This helps children to not feel alone and to find ways to cope with their concerns. Similarly, watch movies that contain positive images of diverse gifted students (e.g., *Finding Forrester*).
- Read books with your children about characters who faced negative pressures, but succeeded (e.g., *I Wish I Were a Butterfly*; *213 Valentines*; *Amazing Grace*; *White Socks Only*; *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear*; *Another Way to Dance*).
- Share personal experiences with your child about how you overcame social injustices. Your objective is to instill hope in your child.
- Talk to your child about the true meaning of friendship. Many students are so eager to have companionship that they affiliate with classmates without regard to their character, integrity, and goals.
- Be forthright in acknowledging that diverse students may exert negative peer pressures on your child (e.g., accuse your child of "acting White"). This is another form of discrimination that cannot be ignored.
- Talk with your child about being assertive at initiating discussions with classmates.
- Above all else, don't lose hope or faith. Be conscious, deliberate, consistent, and systematic in advocating for your child.

Not much has been written about "parenting culturally diverse gifted students." However, some scholars have written books on parenting diverse children that might be a helpful resource. Books on helping children cope with peer pressures may also offer insights and suggestions. Several of the above suggestions were borrowed from strategies my mother adopted as she faced the forced choice of placing me in schools where I did not have to sacrifice achievement or social relationships.

All of us — parents, educators, and others — must take a vested interest in and be proactive in nurturing culturally diverse gifted students. We must work together as if our collective future depends on it — because it does.

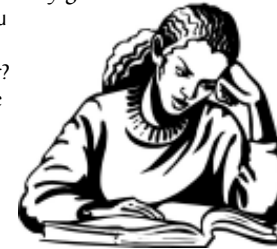
By Dona Ford, Ph.D.

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Developing Math Talent: A Guide for Educating Gifted and Advanced Learners in Math

* By Susan, Ph.D. Assouline & Ann, Ph.D. Lupkowski-Shoplik
 * Publisher: Prufrock Press (September 2005)
 * ISBN-10: 1593631596
 * ISBN-13: 978-1593631598

How are your mathematically gifted students served? Have you examined what they are asked to do year after year? Do you know how to serve them if you discover the need? The above guide is an invaluable source in answering these questions. I have used



Developing Math Talent: A Guide for Educating Gifted And Advanced Learners in Math as the text for my on-line class for Drake's gifted endorsement. I have just finished my third offering of *Gifted Learners: Math Strategies* and the learning that was achieved was thoroughly enhanced by this text. As one of my students, Ruth Lyons, shared "The textbook was a great tool in answering a lot of "wonderings" I had. I thoroughly enjoyed the text and appreciate the small snippets as they were very useful, manageable and clear on the message being portrayed."

Over the past 30 years I have worked with many high ability math students. As I read through the first chapter where the authors address the myths about mathematically talented youngsters, I immediately put the names of several of my former students who supported that these were myths! As I continued through this text, I was able to affirm the author's comments with my real life classroom and specialist happenings.

One area that many teachers and parents are not very familiar with is out of level testing. Drs. Assouline and Lupkowski-Shoplik provide a very clear picture of all educational assessments. As another one of my students, Donna Schmitt, shared "Information presented in the text helped me to better understand the results of my daughter's EXPLORE scores and has better prepared me to



be her advocate when her new school determines which math course she will be enrolled in this fall." Classroom teachers are not usually experts in data interpretation but this information also inspired Donna Westberg, another of my students, to comment "Using testing instruments to determine skill levels and then developing a program for a student just makes sense. We do it all of the time in SPED, but I was unaware that the EXPLORE test would give such detailed and useful information."

The authors do not stop at this point but continue with "Programming", "Curricula and Materials," as well as "Teaching Mathematically Talented Students." They discuss not one way of meeting the needs of the mathematically talented student but of "finding the optimal match." This includes making sure that the student is "stretched," but not overly frustrated by reassessing after a programming decision is put into play. As Georgia Tucker, another on-line student shared, "The book gave me a wonderful basis to start asking questions of G/T team members as well as information to share with accelerated math teachers."



I am positive that all of you have contact with mathematically talented students. They do exist and are too often asked to review needlessly year after year. We are starting a new school year. What will these students be doing during their math time? This text would be an inspiring source for a professional learning community to use for discussion and for change. Classroom teachers, with the support of gifted specialists working together, can make a difference for bright young people in mathematics... especially with this text to guide the way.

By Chris Schultz,
 ITAG Immediate Past President

Growing Your DI Teaching Skills: Choice Menu

CONCEPT: Differentiated Instruction

UNDERSTAND: That to develop your teaching practice, you must take risks, and be reflective in your teaching practice.

KNOW: Differentiated Techniques and Theories

ABLE TO DO: Implement new thinking and new ideas into your classroom practice. Share ideas, lessons and insights with colleagues

NOW YOU GET IT: Choose one option from the menu below, complete and share insights with principal and staff

<p>1</p> <p>Create a Book Club, read and discuss books and/or articles related to DI such as "Inspiring Middle and Secondary Learners" or "Inspiring Elementary Learners"</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Watch videotapes of DI Instruction (see ASCD or BER videos) and discuss with others. How will this new knowledge effect your practice?</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Attend outside training on DI. Try something you learned at the workshop. Share new ideas with others</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Meet after school with others in your grade level to develop DI lessons and discuss things that are working or concerns</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Your Choice: Share with your principal, your plan for enhancing your DI skills. Share with others what you learned</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Formulate a group around an inquiry related to DI. Research, field test, and discuss findings. (EX: How do you manage flexible groups?)</p>

I choose # _____.

My learning community (people you will be working with sharing with, growing with) for this choice are/is:

Nominees for President-Elect



Board Member Linda Mochring has been involved in the field of gifted education for 14 years. She started Odyssey of the Mind, Destination Imagination, Academic Decathlon, GT Retreat for secondary students, and HS courses for credit while in her district. She is a proponent of early programming and identification, and gifted education programming that has rigor and relevance. She is starting her sixth year as a School Improvement Consultant for Heartland AEA II and is serving on the differentiation team for the agency.



Board Member Diane Pratt is completing her second term on the ITAG Board and serves on the Educator Outreach Committee. A presenter at ITAG and IAMLE, she also teaches endorsement classes for the Belin-Blank Center's summer professional development. Diane has been involved with talented and gifted learners for over 25 years, having taught preschool through eighth grade. She received her TAG Endorsement within her master's degree from Buena Vista University. She was the 2000 recipient of ITAG's Research Award and the first David Belin Excellence in Teaching Award. Diane is currently a 5/6 TAG instructor and high school TAG advisor for the Fort Dodge Community School District.



Board Member Tony Voss has served on the board since 2003, the year he was the conference co-chair in Waterloo. Tony taught 4th grade for 12 years and then became the K-12 Talented and Gifted Coordinator at Eldora-New Providence Community Schools through 2005. Along with his coordinator duties he volunteered as trainer for the Tiger football and basketball team and co-advised the Yearbook and Student Council. Tony received his BA from Iowa Wesleyan College in Mt. Pleasant, and his M.A.E in Elementary Curriculum from the University of Northern Iowa. Along with his degrees he has a K-12 TAG Endorsement, K-12 Administrative Endorsement and a Music Approval.

Tony was responsible for expanding the Talented and Gifted Program at E-NP into grades 9-12. He has been a long standing member of ITAG and has recently become active with the Legislative committee. He is a strong advocate for gifted students and gifted programs in rural Iowa.

Nominees for Board of Directors



Sue Chartier is the Gifted Education Consultant for Northwest Area Education Agency. She has been in education 22 years, 10 years as a middle school teacher in the Sioux City Community School District where she had elementary teams in Odyssey of the Mind and Destination Imagination, 12 years as a Consultant and the lead for the Differentiated Instruction Team. Sue has been instrumental in creating the East-West Spring conference, bringing the speakers to both sides of the state for greater attendance opportunity. She earned her BA from Morningside College and MA from the University of South Dakota. Sue is a member of ITAG and NAGC.



Debra Connerly has been involved in the field of gifted education for 22 years. She currently works with K-5 students in the Linn-Mar district and facilitates their elementary TAG program. She has taught the gifted at Linn-Mar for 14 years. Prior to this she taught in Wichita, Kansas, and Kent, Ohio. She received her BS from Ball State University, her gifted endorsement from Kent State University, and her MA from Graceland University.



Board Member Jean Johnson has been an educator in the Sioux City Community School District for 30 years. She served as a gifted education consultant for Western Hills Area Education Agency (now Northwest AEA) from 2003-2006. Currently Jean is the K-12 Talented and Gifted Education Coordinator for the Sioux City schools. Jean received her B.A. degree and her M.A.E. with an endorsement in PK-8 Administration from the University of Northern Iowa. Jean is a member of ASCD, NAGC, and ITAG. She has served as an ITAG Board member and as the ITAG News Magazine Editor since 2004.



Board Member Gail Kenkel has been an educator in Council Bluffs public schools for 29 years. She has taught talented and gifted students since 1993, first as a TAG strategist, and currently as a TAG social studies teacher and TAG strategist for students in grades 2 through 6. Gail earned her B.A. from the University of Kansas (go Jayhawks!) and her master's degree in gifted education from UNI. She is serving on the legislative committee for ITAG.

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Continued from page 9



Kristy M. Latta attended the Sioux City Community School District and later the West Des Moines Community School District. She participated in gifted learning programs such as TAG and ELP. She received her B.A. with distinction from The University of Iowa in 2002 and her J.D. with high honors from Drake University Law School in 2005. While in law school, she served on the Drake Law Review. She is a member of the Order of the Coif. She was admitted to the Iowa Bar in 2005 and served as a judicial law clerk to Justice David S. Wiggins of the Iowa Supreme Court from 2005 to 2006. She is currently an associate attorney practicing in the Education Law and Local Government Law groups at Ahlers & Cooney, P.C. in Des Moines, Iowa. She is a member of the Polk County, Iowa State, and American Bar Associations, as well as a member of the Iowa Council of School Board Attorneys and the National School Board Association's Council of School Attorneys.



LeAnn Oldenburger graduated from Drake University with a BFA in Theatre Education in 1994. She is in her second year of teaching and teaches ELP half time at Carlisle Middle School. She completed her TAG endorsement from Drake University in 2007. She enjoys working with gifted children. She was a student in the inaugural year of the Central Academy in Des Moines and as a young adult she served as a community liaison for the Des Moines Gifted Program. She has also served as the G/T program coordinator for MENSA. LeAnn is a mother of talented and gifted children. "I merged my love of family and education with my choice to home school. I have home schooled my children for seven years."



Karen Thorpe is currently the Elementary Curriculum Coordinator in the College Community School District in Cedar Rapids, IA. She received her BS in Elementary Education from the University of Iowa and her Administrative degree from the University of Northern Iowa. In an educational career spanning 33 years, she has been an elementary classroom teacher, media specialist, and has taught identified Gifted and Talented students in grades 4 and 5. Ms. Thorpe is committed to meeting the needs of all students by ensuring a challenging, engaging educational experience.

Sally Thorson received her degree from UNI and the endorsement for TAG. She was an adjunct professor of Secondary Social Studies Methods class at Wartburg College. During the past 31 years she taught at Waverly-Shell Rock and was involved in TAG since 1985. Among her contributions to education, Sally developed W-SR 7-12 TAG programming, taught AP US History, authored lesson in collaboration with the Herbert Hoover Library for students in AP US History and has presented at the national conventions for Teachers of American History in Pittsburgh PA and San Antonio TX. Sally was an academic coach for Mock Trial (18 years/ 16 years to state). She has been involved with National History Day (21 years/8 times to nationals), National Oratorical, Iowa Math League and MathCounts, Science Bowl teams, eCybermission, Future Problem Solvers, and many more.



Kenn Wathen has been an educator for 27 years and an Iowa educator for the past 18 years. His experiences include teaching elementary school, mostly in multi-age primary classrooms, for 7 years and serving as elementary principal for 20 years. He is currently beginning his 12th year as the elementary principal for the Hamburg CSD. He serves on the AEA 13 ELL Advisory Committee. He has served as an adjunct instructor for Buena Vista University teaching Human Relations and Teaching of Reading and worked as a Reading Consultant for curriculum development for Southern Prairie AEA. He is the parent of a gifted student who was involved in Belin-Blank Center programs throughout junior high and high school and who entered the Early Start program at the Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa in the fall semester 2005. Kenn was also a 2006 Belin Fellow at the Belin-Blank Center. Kenn earned his B.S.S. from Cornell College and his M.S.E. from Wayne State College. He is a current member of NCTM, IRA, NAESP, SAI, IAEYC, NAEYC, ITAG and NAGC.

**Please complete the ballot on page 11 and return it to:
ITAG, 5619 NW 86th, Suite 600, Johnston, IA 50131-2955.
Due October 6, 2008.
Results will be announced at the 2008 ITAG Annual Conference.**

EDITOR'S NOTE!!

Differentiation in the general education classroom is an important and effective way to meet the needs of our diverse learners. Administrators may find these tools (on pages 15 and 16), developed by Kathleen Kryza, useful as they move forward with their staff in their efforts to differentiate for the students in their buildings. Kathleen Kryza, Alicia Duncan and Joy Stephens have authored two excellent resources titled *Inspiring Middle and Secondary Learners* and *Inspiring Elementary Learners*. These books provide educators with practical, easy to use strategies that are sure to inspire all learners in today's diverse classrooms. For more information about Kathleen's books or workshops go to www.kathleenkryza.com.

Observing for Differentiation in the Classroom: Macro

Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

Coach/Observer: _____

Classroom Environment: Do you see any of the following...

- Posters, charts or anything else around the room that speaks to learning differences or diversity (i.e. Multiple Intelligences, Learning Styles, Teach Tolerance, Fairness etc.)
- Students working in flexible groupings for different purposes at different times
- Various examples of Student Quality Work posted in the room

The Teacher should ...

- Have data about the students as learners gathered in an accessible format
- Teach to different learning styles and/or multiple intelligences
- Challenge advanced learners
- Adapt instruction for special needs students
- Assess before, during and after learning
- Use rubrics, with students engaged in self-assessment
- Verbally talk about how all learners have different learning needs

The Students are...

- Knowledgeable about their learning strengths and areas of challenge
- Know how to self evaluate and reflect on their learning
- Feel that they are responsible for their own learning
- Finding constructive things to do if they are done early or are waiting for the teacher

Some Types of Differentiated Lessons Teachers Should be Using

- Multiple Intelligences/ Learning Styles
- Raft Plus
- Curriculum Compacting
- Activity Menus/Choice Activities
- Tiered Assignments
- Learning Centers/ Stations
- Anchor Activities
- Learning Contracts and Independent Contracts
- Projects with Choices

A Parent's Guide To ITAG's Annual Conference Too much? Too little? Just right?

The ITAG Annual Professional Development Conference can be a rich and resourceful experience for any parent wanting to find out more about gifted and talented education in Iowa. A common misconception is that the conference is just for teachers and counselors. Whether your child attends private or public school or is homeschooled, there are plenty of sessions and resources available to meet their unique needs.

I often characterize my first ITAG conference as drinking from a fire hose: so many resources flooding me at one time. It was also challenging to make the best use of my time. Each of you will have your own method and plan. Rest assured that there is no one right answer to this challenge. The good news is that it is a terrific problem to have. I hope these suggestions will help you find your level of just right.

- First, consider your needs. Are you wondering about identification? Preschool? Early elementary? Middle school? Secondary? Review the program offerings. ITAG publishes a guide to preview the conference schedule on their website <http://www.iowatag.org>. ITAG's annual conference is also a terrific resource for parent groups.
- Review the speakers' backgrounds and hometowns. You might find someone from your district or community who would be willing to make a presentation at a parent meeting. I have found the workshop presenters to be especially passionate about helping gifted kids and their families. Sometimes choosing the workshop session you'll attend by speaker, instead of by topic, will result in some positive connections.
- Take a chance. If there is a workshop on something new, and you're interested, mark it as a possibility. What's the worst that could happen? During one timeslot, a workshop I really wanted to attend was standing room only! (Another clue!) I popped into a room nearby and heard a terrific speaker (and also checked out if the standing room only workshop was offered again at another time - it was and I got there early!) Flexibility is a good thing. If you're still uncertain about what to attend, ASK! ITAG staff, other parents, and teachers can be most helpful. There will be a formal chance for parents to network

and reflect on Tuesday at 2:35 in the Coral Ballroom with Gail and Claudia.

- How to approach the Vendor Exhibits? Bring a light weight tote and a credit card or cash. You will certainly find something that you can't live without. Many resources are available for science, math, reading, and more.
- Finally, share what you've discovered. When you share what you've learned with friends, other parents, teachers, and counselors, you'll find that you retain more of what you experience and connect with kindred spirits as well.

So, consider coming to Coralville in October. Besides ITAG's conference, Iowa City has some wonderful sites for children and adults alike. Together you will discover what is just right for you.

Originally published by Mary Lovell
Fall 2007 TEMPO: Texas Association
for the Gifted and Talented, Page 14.
Adapted by Gail Kenkel and
Chris Schultz, 2008.



**"No Bird flies too high if he
soars with his own wings."**

- Ralph Waldo Emerson -

Ballot 2008



Please complete this ballot and return it to ITAG, 5619 NW 86th, Suite 600, Johnston, IA 50131-2955. Due October 6, 2008.

Sealed ballots received in the U.S. Mail will be delivered to the ITAG Nominations Committee for tallying. Results will be announced at the 2008 ITAG Annual Conference. Candidate biographical information is included on page 9 and 10.

A simple plurality of votes shall constitute election to office.

Please vote for 1 by checking the box located to the left of their name.

- President-Elect Linda Moehring, Carlisle
- President-Elect Diane Pratt, Fort Dodge
- President-Elect Tony Voss, Des Moines

Candidates for Election to the Board 2008 – 2010

Please vote for 5 by checking the box located to the left of their name.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sue Chartier, Sioux City | <input type="checkbox"/> LeeAnn Oldenburger, Des Moines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deb Connerly, Cedar Rapids | <input type="checkbox"/> Karen Thorpe, Cedar Rapids |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jean Johnson, Sioux City | <input type="checkbox"/> Sally Thorson, Waverly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gail Kenkel, Council Bluffs | <input type="checkbox"/> Kenn Wathen, Hamburg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kristy Latta, Des Moines | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ (write in candidate and city) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ (write in candidate and city) |

Return by October 6, 2008 to:

**If you have questions, please call
(515) 225-2323**

**ITAG
5619 NW 86th Street, Suite 600
Johnston, IA 50131-2955**

Iowa Talented and Gifted Association's 2008 Conference will be held October 6th and 7th at the Coralville Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, Coralville, Iowa



**Celebrating 36
years with
ITAG in Iowa**

Keynote Presenters include:

*Dr. Bertie Kingore
Dr. Paul Slocumb*

*Look for registration materials in the mail
and at www.iowatag.org this fall.*

ITAG Conference October 6-7, 2008
Coralville Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, Coralville, IA

Name _____
(PLEASE PRINT AS TO APPEAR ON NAME BADGE.)

Home address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home phone () _____ Work phone () _____

School/Organization _____

Position _____

AEA # _____ Email _____

CONFERENCE FEES (Please Check appropriate boxes)

- Full Conference - Monday, Tuesday \$225.00
(Includes beverage breaks, continental breakfast and lunch Monday and Tuesday.)
- Monday Only \$125.00
(Includes beverage breaks, continental breakfast and lunch on Monday.)
- Tuesday Only \$125.00
(Includes beverage breaks, continental breakfast and lunch on Tuesday.)
- Full-time college student
 - One Day Only \$35.00
 - Two Days Only \$70.00
- Monday - Special Invitation to Principals, Curriculum Directors, Superintendents and Administrators, and Secondary Counselors:** Attend Monday with a teacher who pays the conference registration fee.
(One day guest pass (\$45) for each registered teacher attending)
_____ Name of Conference Attendee Attending Guest pass for Monday ... \$45.00
- Tuesday - Special Invitation to Classroom Teachers to attend with their Gifted Specialist** who pays the conference registration fee. (Tuesday will emphasize Differentiation for Gifted.)
(One day guest pass (\$45) to attend)
_____ Name of Conference Attendee Attending Guest pass for Tuesday \$45.00
- I would like to purchase Dr. Paul Slocumb's book, *Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty*.
It will be available for me to pick up at registration..... \$23.00
- LATE REGISTRATION (Postmarked after September 19, 2008) \$25.00

CREDIT: Board members and presenters, apply registration credit as detailed below before computing total conference fee. Only one deduction is allowed.

- ITAG Board Member (\$25.00)
- ITAG Presenter (\$25.00)

TOTAL CONFERENCE \$ _____
\$ _____



Make check or purchase order payable to: ITAG
Mail registration to: ITAG Conference 2008
5619 NW 86th Street, Suite 600
Johnston, IA 50131-5955