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

ITAG NEWS MAGAZINE

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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

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News Magazine

Volume 33, Number 2 - Spring 2008

The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model (SCGM) Providing Full Time Gifted Services on Limited Budgets

What would the public schools look like without its gifted students? How long will parents watch their gifted children experience ongoing frustration in school because their advanced learning needs are consistently sacrificed to the remedial learning needs of some of their classmates? What can our schools do to keep their gifted students enrolled and productive? This article describes one possible solution: The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model.

Isn't Cluster Grouping The Same As Tracking?

No. In a tracking system, all students are grouped by ability for much of the school day, and students tend to remain in the same track throughout their school experience. In the SCGM, gifted students are the only ones grouped with others of similar abilities. All other students are grouped heterogeneously. Another difference is that with cluster grouping, all students have access to grade level standards; expectations are not lowered for any group of learners.

Should The Cluster Grouping Model Replace Out-Of-Class Enrichment Programs For Gifted Students?

No, because cluster grouping provides an effective complement to any gifted education program. Gifted cluster teachers are trained to know how to use the time when gifted students are out of class to reinforce previously taught concepts instead of introducing new material.

What Does It Mean To Place Gifted Students In Cluster Groups?

A group of four to eight identified gifted students, who are usually in the top 5% of ability in the grade level population, are clustered in a mixed-ability classroom and placed with a teacher who has had training in how to teach exceptionally capable students. If the numbers are larger, more cluster groups may be formed.

Why Should Gifted Students Be Placed In A Cluster Group Instead Of Being Assigned Evenly To All Classes?

Teaching in a totally heterogeneous class is very frustrating. The closer the calendar gets to state testing time, the less time teachers feel they can afford to spend with students who will probably do well on those tests.

Often, the highest ability students are expected to "make it on their own." When a teacher has several gifted students, taking the time to make appropriate provisions for them seems more realistic. When gifted students are clustered in classrooms of teachers who have had gifted education training, those teachers are much more likely to offer appropriate accommodations to gifted students' advanced learning styles.

Won't The Creation Of A Cluster Group Rob The Other Classes Of Academic Leadership?

After the gifted clusters are formed, all other classes are assigned a cluster of high average students. This guarantees academic leadership in all classes. Classes with gifted clusters do not have the lowest scoring students in them. All other classes do not have identified gifted students in them. All classes are still heterogeneous. This grouping model is thoroughly explained in The Cluster Grouping Handbook (Winebrenner and Brulles).

Aren't Gifted Students Needed In All Classes So They Can Help Others Learn?

No. Research on role modeling (Schunk) indicates that to be effective, role models cannot be drastically discrepant in ability from those who would be motivated by them. Gifted students are often impatient with those who do not learn as quickly as they do, and their style of explaining something is often quite different from the way



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

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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.

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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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When children are small, they're learning new skills at an astounding pace; but they don't attain success without a patient and willing partner in learning – a "teacher" – to show them the way. Teachers as professionals are no different. In a brilliant article titled "The Kind of Schools We Need," (Kappan, 2002) Elliot Eisner wrote, "... whatever teachers become professionally, the process is not finished when they complete their teacher education program at age 21. Learning to teach well is a lifetime endeavor. The growth of understanding and skill in teaching terminates only when we do." Given this idea, we must ask...

- Do all the teachers in my building feel they have professional development opportunities, support to implement new learning, time and skills to collaborate, and the safe environment in which risk-taking incubates?
- Do they embrace the value of professional development?
- Do they have distinct opportunities to learn about the nature and needs of gifted children?
- Are they aware of the ins and outs of our district programming? Of how gifted and talented is (or isn't) integrated into district or building-wide professional development?
- Is gifted and talented professional development a one-shot, short-term thing; or do I, as gifted education expert, help connect it to and embed it in the bigger picture of PD?

Sometimes, we are frustrated because gifted programming seems to be that "thing" districts must provide to be in compliance for a Department of Education accreditation site visit. Houston and Sokolow said, "Where attention goes, energy flows." Points to ponder include...

- How can I as a teacher of gifted children bring positive attention to the services I provide?
- Am I assuming leadership roles in my building and/or district and consistently bringing gifted kids' needs to everyone's attention?
- Have I helped teachers connect what they already know to what's good for gifted kids? And more important – have I done this myself?
- Are there data to show that gifted children are making academic gains as a result of the programming and services they receive?
- Do we know, and if so how, that gifted children's social and emotional needs are met?
- How have we engaged parents as partners in the educational process?

- Am I willing to engage in the tough professional conversations that accompany new learning?

As the school year comes to a close, take time to reflect on these and other questions. Consider the words of Michael C. Thompson from a keynote address delivered to the 2000 National Curriculum Network Conference:

"In the field of gifted education, there are two terms: gifted and education. In recent decades, our work has focused intensely on what it means to be gifted, but less intensely on what it means to be educated. And yet, it is being educated that is the goal. Being gifted is not the goal; it is the condition that makes high education possible."

I would urge all of us to take a lesson from the Earth in springtime and engage in a renewal of our spirit for this rewarding work and a renewal in our professional practices and their promise for gifted children.

****For the full text of Thompson's address "Curriculum as Profound Engagement with the World," visit <http://www.cfge.wm.edu/Gifted%20Educ%20Artices/CurriculumProfound.html>***

By ITAG President Mary Schmidt

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well as laying the groundwork and developing a legislative strategy will increase the odds for success. We were encouraged to be considerate and prepared before going to a meeting with teachers, school districts, etc., and advocating one message, not several. Two ladies from our group, Ann Sheldon and Ginny Burney, had 10 "Shock and Awe" tips for advocacy:

10. It is not necessarily about a good idea.
9. Eat the elephant one bite at a time; invite others to help you dine.
8. Pay attention; go and sit there.
7. Remember the minority party players.
6. Be polite, classy, informed, trustworthy.
5. Persistence is the key.
4. Be prepared for questions, for compromises, for issues, for alternate proposals.
3. Listen.
2. Less is more. Have a succinct message with backup information available.
1. No never really means no.

By Gail Kenkel
ITAG Legislative Co-Chair

Things are looking up! It's been at least a week since the last snowflake flew, the piles of snow are melted, and warmer temperatures are around the corner. Perhaps spring really is here. (I know, this is Iowa; but one must cling to hope!) It seems paradoxical to me that spring, the time of rebirth and new beginnings, also marks an important ending: that of the traditional school year. Kids are anxious to get started on a summer break and put closure on the nine months of schooling they've experienced. Teachers are frazzled and frustrated and delirious to pick up the novel-for-pleasure that's languished on the shelf or bedside table for an entire school year. With that feeling of frustration in mind, I muse about something that occurred years ago but seems like yesterday...

In the late 1980's when I was teaching 9th grade English in Waukon, Iowa, a good friend and colleague started the gifted and talented program for the district. She was among the first group of many to earn a Masters in gifted education under the tutelage of Dr. Bill Waack at the University of Northern Iowa. She demonstrated passion, persistence, and patience as she dealt with those on staff who resented having kids pulled from classes but then marveled at the amazing things these kids accomplished. Something Jann said several years later as I prepared for my journey into gifted education still rings true: "The more you know about gifted, the more frustrated you'll be." I have experienced the truth of her statement on many occasions, but I'd like to share some ideas that caused me to consider how that frustration can be overcome.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the French writer said, "A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man con-

templates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral." These words illustrate the importance of vision, of finding the positive where negativity reigns, and of connecting dots that don't seem to be related at all. If, however, all we have are vision, positive attitude, and the ability to make connections, we won't make a real difference for children. We've got to develop a laser focus, become as educated as possible – experts in this field we have chosen – and then develop and deliver the programming that will bring this vision to life.

According to the famed photographer Ansel Adams, "There's nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept." This quote raises important questions for schools and teachers of gifted children.

- Do we take the time to clarify the purpose and rationale for our gifted programming?
- Are our goals – for programming and for kids – crystal clear, focused, measurable, and meaningful?
- Are we communicating frequently with kids, parents, teachers, administrators, and school boards about substantive issues?
- Have we laid out a gifted and talented plan that integrates services into the larger educational system and supports our commitment to including gifted children when the word "ALL" crosses our lips?

Honest answers to these questions and corresponding improvements to our programming make appropriate education for gifted children a reality.

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the teacher has taught the content. The most effective role models come from capable, but not gifted students.

Won't The Presence Of The Clustered Gifted Students Inhibit The Performance Of The Other Students In That Class?

No, many cluster teachers report that there is general improvement in overall achievement for the entire class. This suggests the exciting possibility that when teachers learn how to provide what gifted students need, and offer modified versions of the same opportunities to the entire class, achievement for all students can be positively impacted.

How Should Gifted Students Be Identified For The Cluster Group?

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data should be used to identify the students who will be assigned to gifted clusters. Students who demonstrate advanced abilities, regardless of their actual classroom performance or productivity, are placed in the gifted cluster. This includes gifted students who are not fluent in English, who are twice exceptional, who are in the primary grades, and who are considered "underachievers". If students have gifted ability, they are placed in the gifted clusters.

What Are The Learning Needs of Gifted Students?

Since these students have previously mastered many of the concepts they are expected to "learn" in a given class, a huge part of their school time may be wasted. They need exactly what all other students need: consistent opportunity to learn new material and to develop the behaviors that allow them to cope with the challenge and struggle of new learning.

What Specific Skills Are Needed By Gifted Cluster Teachers?

Cluster teachers should know how to recognize and nurture behaviors demonstrated by gifted students and to:

- create a learning environment in which all students will be stretched to learn,
- allow students to demonstrate and get credit for previous mastery of concepts,

- provide opportunities for faster pacing of new material,
- incorporate students' passionate interests into their independent studies,
- facilitate sophisticated research investigations, and
- provide flexible grouping opportunities for the entire class.

Is Clustering Feasible Only in Elementary School?

No. Cluster grouping may be used at all grade levels and in all subject areas.

Are Gifted Cluster Groups "Visible" In The Classroom?

No. Since opportunities for moving faster or going deeper into the curriculum are always offered to the entire class, there are times when some students in the cluster group will be experiencing differentiation, and times when they won't. All students who demonstrate a need for differentiation receive it. Ongoing teacher assessment of student progress, along with careful use of flexible grouping, make the SCGM fair and equitable for all students.

What Are The Advantages Of Cluster Grouping?

Gifted students feel more comfortable when there are other students just like them in the class. They are more likely to choose more challenging tasks when other students will also be participating. Teachers are also much more likely to provide appropriate learning opportunities if several students will benefit. The school is able to provide a full-time, cost-effective program for gifted students. Since their learning needs are being met every day, happy gifted kids with satisfied parents do not leave public education.

What Are Some Possible Challenges With Cluster Grouping?

There may be pressure from parents to have their high ability children placed in a cluster classroom, even if they are not in the actual cluster group. These parents will be relieved to know that their high ability children will have more opportunities to "shine" when they are not in the same class with the gifted cluster. Gifted students may move into the district during the school year and may not be able to be placed in the cluster classroom. These situations may be handled by:

- providing training for all staff in compacting and differentiation so parents can expect those opportunities in all classes,

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Cluster Grouping Model Con't



Continued from page 4

- requiring parents to provide written documentation of their reasons for requesting a certain teacher,
- rotating the cluster teacher assignment every two years among teachers who have had appropriate training so parents understand that many teachers are capable of teaching gifted students.

Another challenge might result if the cluster teachers are not expected to consistently compact and differentiate the curriculum. Their "supervisor" must be vigilant to monitor that appropriate learning opportunities are always available.

How Can We Obtain Assistance As We Plan Our Cluster Program?

A list of schools that use cluster grouping for gifted students is available at www.susanwinebrenner.com – use the link "Cluster Grouping Practitioners". For each school listed, there is a name and phone number of a person in charge of the cluster grouping who is willing to talk to program coordinators and school administrators who are seeking information. The Cluster Grouping Handbook (Winebrenner and Brulles) contains all the information you need to use the model effectively.

Conclusion

If gifted students are not placed into gifted cluster groups, and are not adequately served with other methods, their achievement and learning motivation are likely to diminish over time. Parents of gifted students may choose to enroll their children in alternative programs, such as home schooling or charter schools. The practice of cluster grouping represents a mindful way to make sure gifted students continue to receive a quality education at the same time schools work to improve learning opportunities for all students. The Schoolwide Cluster Grouping Model is a highly effective way to challenge gifted students while improving achievement for many other students as well.

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By Susan Winebrenner and Dina Brulles

Check out our exciting ITAG website at www.iowatag.org!

A new opportunity has opened up on our website for ITAG Institutional Members!

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.

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

Nine tenths of education is encouragement. – Anatole France



Engaging and Keeping our Bright, Gifted Boys

After some 35 years of feminist movement in this country, plenty of issues facing females still exist. In that process, however, boys have slipped through the cracks. The statistics on boys are both disturbing and alarming.

- From elementary school through high school, boys receive lower grades than girls do.
- Eighth grade boys are retained 50% more often than eighth grade girls.
- By the time they reach high school, boys account for more than two thirds of the students in special education.
- Fewer boys than girls now attend and graduate from college.
- Fifty-nine percent of all masters' degree candidates are now women. In every racial and ethnic group, women outnumber males in the acquisition of college degrees. One hundred and thirty-three females get an undergraduate degree to every 100 males.
- Boys are up to 10 times more likely to suffer from hyperactivity than girls are.
- Boys are 10 times more likely to be labeled ADHD.
- Ninety-five percent of all juvenile homicides are committed by boys.
- Males account for almost nine out of 10 alcohol and drug law violations.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among boys in their mid-to-late teens (accidents and homicides are first and second).
- Boys are more likely to face verbal abuse than girls in the classroom and at home.
- Boys are four times more likely to be prescribed Ritalin. Currently over four million boys take Ritalin daily in the U.S.
- Boys are slower to develop impulse control than girls are.
- Seventy-six percent of all students labeled emotionally disturbed are boys.

With increased pressure on schools to perform, more and more classrooms have resorted to pencil-paper tasks, allowing for less movement, and reducing the number of hands-on activities for students. This has resulted in many schools and classrooms becoming more girl-friendly than boy-friendly.

Understanding the wiring of the male brain can assist teachers in being more effective with gifted boys academically. The following modifications in a classroom can help boys become more successful in school.

- Spatial ability is an area of strength in the male brain. Putting things in diagram form or using symbols aligns with this area of strength. Boys are iconic thinkers; they tend to think and process information better when it is presented in symbols, pictures, and diagrams. Instead of giving boys a step sheet in narrative form, try putting the steps in the form of a flowchart. Girls typically prefer the words.
- When giving boys explanations, try to get to the bottom line. Think in terms of bulleted items or lists. When boys are bombarded with long narrative explanations, they tend to disengage.
- Boys are basically deductive thinkers. When conducting inquiry lessons and Socratic questioning, boys may need more coaching to be successful. When frustration sets in, be prepared to give the boy the generalization and then have him find the examples to support the generalization or theory.
- The corpus callosum is the bridge portion at the front of the brain that connects the left and right hemispheres of the brain. In the male brain, the corpus callosum is smaller than in their female counterparts. This size difference makes girls better at multi-tasking than boys. As a result boys prefer doing one thing at a time, often refusing to let go of an existing task in order to move to another task. To assist boys in the classroom with this, consider using a timer. Set the timer and say, "Try getting to a stopping point before the timer goes off." Most boys will compete with the clock because they tend to be highly competitive.
- For boys who need to move around, try to allow them to have an area in which to move. Place some desks at the back of the room and put masking tape on the floor. Say to the boys: "If you need to move while reading, writing, etc, you can sit at that desk and get up as long as you stay within the taped-off area." Most boys can move in this way without disturbing others. Giving boys an opportunity to get up periodically as part of an instructional lesson can also help boys to continue being engaged in the lesson. The movement can be as simple as asking the students in row four to trade places with the students in row two and then work with the person across from you in doing a given task.

HIGH ACHIEVER, GIFTED LEARNER, CREATIVE THINKER

A High Achiever...	A Gifted Learner...	A Creative Thinker...
Remembers the answers.	Poses unforeseen questions.	Sees exceptions.
Is interested.	Is curious.	Wonders.
Is attentive.	Is selectively mentally engaged	Daydreams; may seem off task.
Generates advanced ideas.	Generates complex, abstract ideas.	Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed.
Works hard to achieve.	Knows without working hard.	Plays with ideas and concepts
Answers the questions in detail.	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives.	Injects new possibilities.
Performs at the top of the group.	Is beyond the group.	Is in own group.
Responds with interest and opinions.	Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives.	Shares bizarre, sometimes conflicting opinions.
Learns with ease.	Already knows.	Questions: What if...
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions to master.	Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master.	Questions the need for mastery.
Comprehends at a high level.	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas.	Abstracts beyond original ideas.
Enjoys the company of age peers.	Prefers the company of intellectual peers.	Prefers the company of creative peers but often works alone.
Understands complex, abstract humor.	Creates complex, abstract humor.	Relishes wild, off-the-wall humor.
Grasps the meaning.	Infers and connects concepts.	Makes mental leaps: Aha!
Completes assignments on time.	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments.	Initiates more projects than will ever be completed.
Is receptive.	Is intense.	Is independent and unconventional.
Is accurate and complete.	Is original and continually developing.	Is original, ever changing, and misunderstood.
Enjoys school often.	Enjoys self-directed learning.	Enjoys creating.
Absorbs information.	Manipulates information.	Improvises.
Is a technician with expertise in a field.	Is an expert, abstracts beyond the field.	Is an inventor and idea generator.
Memorizes well.	Guesses and infers well.	Creates and brainstorms well.
Is highly alert and observant.	Anticipates and relates observations.	Is intuitive.
Is pleased with own learning.	Is self-critical.	Is never finished with possibilities.
Gets A's.	May not be motivated by grades.	May not be motivated by grades.
Is able.	Is intellectual.	Is idiosyncratic.

Kingore, B. (2004). *Differentiation: Simplified, Realistic, and Effective*. Austin: Professional Associates Publishing.

High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Thinker

In this era of standards-driven education, legislators and educators continue to misinterpret high achievement as giftedness and misinterpret creativity as a fluffy extra. Educators who work with gifted learners and creative thinkers experience frustration trying to help others understand that while high achievers are valuable participants whose high-level modeling is desired in the classroom, they learn differently from gifted learners and creative thinkers. In environments where learners are respected, valued, and encouraged, gifted students' thinking is more complex and characterized by abstract inferences and diverse perceptions that are not typical of high achievers. Creative thinkers, working in respectful learning environments, question the known, inject new possibilities, and make mental leaps that surpass the correct-answer-driven responses of high achievers.

Over several years, while working with students representing the high achievers, gifted learners, and creative thinkers who co-exist in many classrooms, a three-way comparison emerged. I have invited hundreds of teachers and students to review and discuss the items. The resulting three-column comparison is proposed for your reflection. Stimulating discussion rather than fostering agreement is the goal.

No column is mutually exclusive. A high achiever might also be a creative thinker; a creative thinker might also be a gifted learner; a gifted learner might choose to be a high achiever; or a student might exhibit behaviors in all three columns. The characteristics are not intended to imply that the value of any column is greater than another. The intent is to articulate the differences among the three groups so we honor this diversity to constructively address appropriate educational services for each. Inattentive, off-task behaviors are more likely when classes stress the same learning standards as the ultimate goal for all students regardless of readiness or learning profile.

Many years ago, Paul Torrance (1970) mused that teachers are more concerned with what students appear to be than who they are. Typical curricula and learning environments have fostered and perhaps suggest a preference for responding to high achievers and the school-appropriate behaviors they model. Adults comment on these students' consistent high grades and sometimes assume these students are gifted because their achievements surface above the

typical responses of grade-level students. High-achieving students are noticed for their on-time, neat, well-developed, and correct learning products. However, students' attentive, on-task behaviors are not the learning goal; these behaviors are the result of respectful tasks designed for students at an appropriate pace and level of instruction. Creative thinkers are attentive and productive when learning opportunities invite original thinking. Gifted learners are attentive and exude high achievement when concepts and skills are at their advanced readiness levels. Hence, it is important to clarify and extend among administrators, teachers, parents, and students an understanding of the marvelous similarities and differences among high achievers, gifted learners, and creative thinkers. This understanding then challenges educators to provide differentiated services that potentially match the paces, levels, and learning profiles of these students.

Certainly, we can educate rather than give lip service to nurturing gifted learners and creative thinkers. Perhaps the ultimate goal of education is not to teach students what we know but to teach them to understand conceptually and pose essential questions that escalate continuous growth and understanding (Erickson, 2007; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In addition to accurate and complete, it is time to envision original and continually developing as desired education outcomes for students. All children deserve the right to learn at their highest level of readiness—even the gifted.

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Three-column chart can be found on page 19

By Dr. Bertie Kingore, Ph.D.

Adapted from Kingore, B. (2004).

Differentiation: Simplified, Realistic, and Effective.

- To promote writing, allow boys to draw pictures of what they want to say. Many boys love to doodle. Use that to your advantage. It can be a pre-writing activity that motivates boys. Draw pictures of vocabulary words. The brain has a limited ability to remember words, but it has an almost unlimited ability to remember pictures. Allow boys to write about things they are interested in, which may include some things considered gross. As one 11 year-old told his mom, "Mom, you know I am into grossology." Computers can also allow boys to write without physical effort of putting pencil on paper and forming the letters correctly. Word prediction software, such as Co-writer, allows boys to type the first few letters of the word and then have the program give them choices of the words they may be trying to type.
- To promote reading, allow boys to choose things that interest them. Boys prefer how-to books and articles over fiction. Boys like action-centered material. Audio books, graphic books, how-to-books, sports, cars, and adventure appeal to middle school boys. There are reading lists of recommended books now available that have been generated by other males. Two such sources can be found at <http://www.guysread.com> and by looking at the recommendations of the American Librarians Association at <http://www.ala.org>. Another possible source is *Great Books for Boys* by Kathleen Odean (1998). To help boys stay focused while reading, allow them to play with nerf balls. It helps take care of the need to touch things, fidgeting, and can help reduce pencil tapping.

Schools tend to be more girl-friendly than they are boy-friendly. Schools are designed to come in, sit down, and get to work. The male brain is wired to come in, sit down, and get up. Boys are more physically active and stay in motion longer than most girls. To minimize discipline problems and to encourage boys to be successful in school, try to include some movement into lessons. Short periods of reading or pencil-paper tasks need to be kept to about 10 to 15 minutes with opportunities to move and talk, separating the tasks. For middle schools that have incorporated block scheduling, building in frequent opportunities for movement is extremely important for boys to be successful.

Including games and competition can also motivate boys to succeed in school. Boys are highly competitive. As a result, they typically do not like small group work. Having boys work in pairs instead of small groups minimizes the competition. When a boy and a girl are paired together, many boys sit

back and allow the girl to do all the work. Being paired with a boy forces them to rely on one another.

Accompanying this shift in the classroom, boys are subjected to ridicule from other boys, especially gifted boys and more sensitive boys. Boys are the recipients of remarks that drive many boys to come to some drastic conclusions that prevent them from excelling in school. The conclusions . . .

- School is for girls and not boys.
- Being smart is synonymous with being a geek or nerd.
- More sensitive boys are often called gays or fags.
- It is not cool to be smart.
- By adolescence, many boys want out of the gifted program.
- Books that are part of the curriculum are often uninteresting to many boys. Reading and writing become a girl-thing and not a guy-thing.

For African-American, Hispanic, and boys from poverty backgrounds, the problem is compounded. These boys frequently lack role models that value academics. African-American, Hispanic, and boys from poverty have fewer peers in the gifted program making it an uncomfortable place for some of these boys. Additionally, they may be accused by their peers as trying to "act white." For some Hispanic students, English may be their second language which further reduces the chance that they will be identified and served in the gifted program.

To increase the probability that boys are going to be successful in the gifted program, several things must be addressed. Schools have to improve their identification processes, allowing for twice exceptionally gifted students. Boys who have labels of ADHD and ED can also be gifted. Second language learners can also be gifted. A higher percentage of boys also suffer from dyslexia but they may also be gifted. Classrooms must incorporate hands-on experiences for boys, allow for movement in the classroom, and create tasks that allow boys to be competitive. Boys need reading material that interests them. Boys prefer more how-to reading and non-fiction than girls do. Since the public school workforce in the United States is 85 percent female and we have increasing numbers of boys being raised by single moms, more male role models are needed, especially professional men who know the pressures placed on bright boys. We must

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make it cool for boys to be smart if we are to attract and keep our brightest young men engaged in courses of study that embrace academic rigor.

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By Paul Slocumb, Ed.D.
Author of *Hear Our Cry: Boys In Crisis*

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.

The Seng Summit

Join the "SENG Summit: Reaching Attitudes and Altitudes," as SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted) celebrates its 25th annual conference, July 18 – 20, 2008, in Salt Lake City, Utah. As usual there will be sessions for parents, educators, health professionals, and children and teens. The keynote speakers, George Betts, Arlene DeVries, Del Siegle, and James Webb will be joined this year by Jim Walkow, composer, performer, and storyteller, who is the creator and executive producer of "Great Moments in Sports from the Point of View of the Ball" which aired on ABC's Monday night Football and Super Bowl XXVIII. As president of Windsor Broadcast productions and recipient of over 25 national awards for the "American Health Journal" television show, his closing keynote, "Unlock the Magic Within You," will educate and entertain with Abbott the Zabbit, who learns many important values from his parents.

There will be opportunities for educators to participate in advanced sessions; psychologists and health care professionals to receive CE credits through the American Psychological Association; and training for facilitators of SENG model parent discussion groups, as well as an advanced session for training of trainers for the parent groups. Participants can choose from offerings including motivation and underachievement, gifted adults, gifted teens, misdiagnosis, interpreting the WISC-IV, bullying and gifted children, over-excitabilities, stress reducers, and many more.

Conference attendees will also have an opportunity to interact with Josh Waitzkin, the international chess champion who inspired the book, *Searching for Bobby Fischer*. Each will receive a copy of his book, *The Art of Learning*. To register and learn more about this conference dedicated to the social and emotional aspects of giftedness, go to www.SENGifted.org.

By Arlene R. DeVries



Affiliate Education Conference in Washington, D.C.



From left to right: Gail Kenkel, James Rice from Senator Grassley's office, and Mary Schmidt.

This year's affiliate education conference was an incredible combination of networking with other gifted education leaders from all over the U.S., learning about the state of gifted education from national leaders such as Sally Reis from the National Research Center, and getting a crash course on Lobbying 101 so we could meet with our congressional senators and representatives. That's a whole lot to accomplish in four days! Mary Schmidt and I learned so much!

Check the NAGC website for full information on our lobbying efforts and what you can do as interested parents, teachers, and advocates of gifted education. Their website is www.nagc.org. Click on "advocacy and legislation" in the left hand column, then click on "legislative update." A detailed version of what our lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill involved is explained there. In short, our goals were:

1. To provide professional development funds in NCLB that includes training for gifted and talented students, including state plans on how they will use federal dollars to train teachers under Title II of NCLB.
2. To modify accountability provisions in NCLB that includes reporting for the performance of above-proficient children. This would require state tests to be able to measure above-grade level achievement and change report cards to report on the performance of our advanced students.
3. To ask Congress to restore the Javits program funding level to its 2002 sum of \$11.25 million for fiscal year 2009.

It was shocking to find out that out of every \$100 Congress allocated for education, just 2.6 cents is invested in

gifted education. As we work to prepare our students to compete with others around the world in careers in science, technology, and math, it's disheartening that our investment in our high ability students is not greater.

Iowa's two senators are key players in this request. Senator Grassley and Senator Dodd co-signed "Dear Colleague" letters to their fellow senators asking them to sign a letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee in support of the Javits funding increase. And who are the two members of this committee? Senator Harkin and Senator Specter.

The "Dear Colleague" letter circulating in the House "closed" on March 17 with 53 signers. The Senate letter "closed" on April 1. Check the NAGC website to see which senators and representatives support this funding increase.

4. To modify the Javits program to convert the current competitive state grants program to a formula grant program. Like Title I funding, this would allow states to receive money to give to local school districts, on a competitive basis, to support programs and services for gifted and talented students. It would provide the following:

- professional development to ensure that school personnel understand the educational needs of gifted students
- innovative programs and services, including service learning
- making materials and services available through state regional educational service centers, institutions of higher education, or other entities
- challenging, high-level course work that utilizes emerging technologies, including distance learning, for individual students or groups of students
- direct educational services and materials, including strategies designed to address the educational needs of gifted students such as curriculum compacting, acceleration, independent study, and dual enrollment

How to Make a Difference

One important thing about making changes or strengthening any gifted program includes building positive relationships. Studying the issues and the players in any situation as

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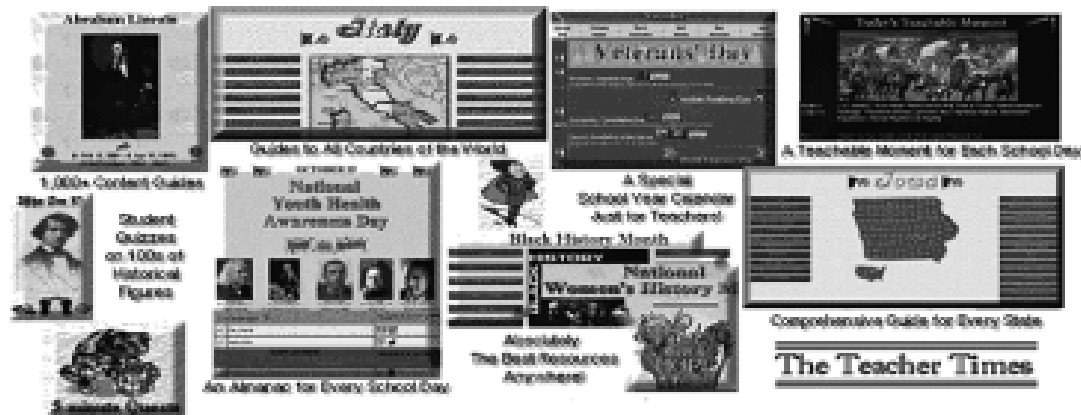
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2008 Distinguished Service Award



The Iowa Talented and Gifted Association Distinguished Service Award is presented in recognition of an individual's exemplary service, contribution, and commitment to Iowa's talented and gifted students. This includes parents, teachers, administrators, or others who have demonstrated effort to positively impact services and opportunities for gifted learners.

Anyone may make a nomination for the award. Affiliate chapters are especially encouraged to submit nominations. Since only one award is usually given each year, many exceptional nominees are yet to be recognized. Current ITAG Board Members are not eligible for this award.

Please use the nomination form on the ITAG website: <http://www.iowatag.org> (resources page) or duplicate this form. Additionally, please include a statement (500 word limit) explaining your reasons for nomination. You may attach other supporting documents and letters of support from administrators, teachers, parents, or students.

No materials will be returned.

Nominee name _____

School district _____

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Nominated by _____

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Please mail your nominations to:
Diane Pratt
 1851 Ninth Ave. N
 Fort Dodge, IA 50501

If you have questions, please contact
 Diane at dpratt@fort-dodge.k12.ia.us

Nominations must be received
 by June 30, 2008

Ten Things All Administrators Should Know About Gifted Children

1. Gifted students are not all alike. They vary in respect to general ability, domain-specific aptitude, interests and predispositions, and motivation and personality. Thus one program or service is insufficient to respond to their diverse needs.

2. Gifted students benefit from interaction with peers. Intellectual peerage contributes to important growth patterns in all subject areas (Kulik & Kulik, 1992). For example, cooperative learning, carried out in heterogeneous classroom settings, produces no growth (Rogers, 2001).

3. Gifted students need various forms of acceleration throughout their school years, ranging from content acceleration to Advanced Placement or dual enrollment to mentorships (Shiever & Maker, 2003; Renzulli & Reis, 2003; Clasen & Clasen, 2003).

4. Gifted students are capable of producing high level products in specific areas of learning at the level of a competent adult (NAGC, 1990). For example, fourth graders can draft a policy for pollution that would rival an adult community committee.

5. Gifted students need to be challenged and stimulated by an advanced and enriched curriculum that is above their current level of functioning in each area of learning (VanTassel-Baska, 2003).

6. Gifted students need to be instructed by personnel trained in the education of gifted students to ensure that they are sufficiently challenged, exposed to appropriate level work, and motivated to excel (Croft, 2003).

7. Gifted students at elementary level require differentiated staffing and flexible scheduling to accommodate their needs; at secondary level, they require special classes (Feldhusen, 2003).

8. Gifted students have counseling needs that require psychosocial, academic, and career preparation on an annual basis (Colangelo, 2003; Greene, 2003; Jackson & Snow, 2004; Silverman, 1993). At secondary level, assigning one counselor to the gifted may be the best staffing model to employ.

9. Gifted students have affective characteristics that render them vulnerable in school settings such as perfectionism, sensitivity, and intensity (Lovecky, 1992; Robinson, 2002).

10. Gifted students in general have healthy social relationships and adjust well to new situations (Robinson, 2002). Concerns for social development more than cognitive growth are rarely warranted.

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ing.

By Joyce Van Tassel-Baska, Ed.D.
Center for Gifted Education,
The College of William and Mary.

Permission for reprint granted by the author.

ITAG Conference October 6-7, 2008

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.)

Sunday activities are planned. Cost to be announced.

Full-time college student

One Day Only \$35.00

Two Days Only \$70.00

Special Invitation to Principals, Curriculum Directors, Superintendents and Administrators:
Attend one day with a teacher who pays the conference registration fee.

(One day guest pass for each registered teacher attending)

_____ Name of Teacher Attending Guest pass per day \$45.00

Monday Only (Administrative Leadership and Secondary Counselor day) Tuesday Only (Tuesday will emphasize Differentiation for Gifted)

I would like ITAG to purchase Dr. Paul Slocumb's book, *Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty* for me.

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, presenters & conference committee members, 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)

ITAG Conference Committee
(\$25.00)



\$ _____
\$ _____
TOTAL CONFERENCE \$ _____

Make check or purchase order payable to: ITAG
Mail registration to: ITAG Conference 2008
8345 University Blvd. Suite F-1, Des Moines, IA 50325-1168
or fax to 515-225-6363

*Celebrating 36 years with ITAG in Iowa
Iowa Talented and Gifted Association 2008 Annual Conference
Coralville Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, Coralville, Iowa
Monday, October 6 and Tuesday, October 7*

ITAG invites you: Gifted and Talented resource teachers, classroom teachers, parents, counselors, coordinators, and administrators to present successful practices and significant issues and theories related to serving the varied needs of gifted and talented students. We have keynote speakers Dr. Paul Slocumb and Dr. Bertie Kingore. Now we need you to join in and complete the picture for addressing comprehensive programming.

Last year's conference participants requested the following topics:

- Continue the administrator strand
- Identification and service of diverse populations
- Break-out sessions for elementary, middle School, and high school
- Understanding the battery of tests used and how to interpret results
- Iowa core and how it connects to gifted education
- Legislative update
- Specific content people and have them make connections to differentiation
- Authentic Intellectual Work – AIW - connections to gifted education
- Practical applications to gifted education for classroom teachers
- Enrichment units that are not competitions
- Core Curriculum ties/differentiation. A Differentiation Strand
- Things to take back and try out
- Sessions for a Parent Strand: Social Emotional, Dealing with Negative Peer Pressure, Benefits of Positive Peer pressure, advocating effectively and positively, Parent resources and contacts, Time for parents to discuss and share successes, concerns, joys/disappointments with the help of a moderator.
- Secondary teachers of gifted want information on other state initiatives

If you have great ideas for any of these, we welcome your participation! Also, if you had a "full house" at a past session, please consider presenting the same session twice.

- Session length: 65 minutes
- Reduced conference fee for presenters

Please return by June 1, 2008 to: ITAG office, 8345 University Blvd., Ste F-1, Des Moines IA 50325
515-225-2323 phone · 515-225-6363 fax · itag@assoc-serv.com

Title of my presentation(s)* _____

Session will target (please check all that apply):

- Audience New G/T Experienced G/T Classroom Teacher
 Parents Administration Support Personnel

- Student level Primary Middle School High School General

- Equipment needed Table Overhead (Presenter provides other AV equipment)

- Session preference Monday Tuesday Willing to present twice? Yes No

Name _____

Home Address _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

School/Organization _____ E-mail _____

Position/involvement w/GT students _____ Fax # _____

Work Address _____

* Please attach a typed 25-50 word abstract of your presentation for use in the conference program.

Iowa Gifted Education Facts

- * The Iowa Department of Education estimates there are more than 40,000 identified gifted children in Iowa's public schools.
- * State law mandates that school districts identify these gifted students and provide them with appropriate programming matched to need. Iowa law also provides funding to public school districts to meet the terms of the mandate.
- * Through the efforts of its Legislative Network, the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association was instrumental in securing the mandate for gifted and talented and the inclusion of gifted and talented in the regular school funding formula in 1999.
- * Gifted and Talented is part of the regular school funding formula in Iowa. For FY08 (2007-08 school year) each public school district received \$50 per pupil enrolled as of the previous September. Each district was required to contribute \$16.67 per pupil for a total of \$66.67. These funds are to be used for services to identified gifted children. The amount is adjusted each year based on Allowable Growth percentages.
- * There is a mandate requiring identification, programming, staffing, and in-service design; however, Iowa Code does not provide specific guidance for how these provisions will be met. Therefore, meeting the terms of the mandate is left to individual districts and varies widely from one district to the next.
- * Iowa requires teachers of gifted children to hold the State of Iowa Gifted and Talented Endorsement if those teachers were licensed in Iowa after 1995. Teachers licensed prior to 1995 may teach gifted in the grade span of their original license without the endorsement.
- * The Iowa Department of Education is working to strengthen teacher preparation requirements in the area of gifted and talented.
- * School districts in Iowa have their gifted and talented programming monitored by the Iowa Department of Education during the accreditation site visit each district receives every five years.
- * Heartland AEA II is the only Iowa Area Education Agency to support a full time consultant for gifted education and requires that consultant to hold the State of Iowa Gifted and Talented Endorsement.

*Looking for some great summer reading
for your gifted child?*



Go to www.hoagiesgifted.org or <http://vcbconsulting.com/gtworld/gtbook.htm> for a list of books that is sure to capture interest during those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer.

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.

Dr. Bertie Kingore

Dr. Kingore is an international consultant and the author of twenty-four books, numerous articles, and instructional aids. She has received many honors including the Legacy Award as the Author of the 2005 Educator Book of the Year and the Outstanding Alumnus Award from the University of North Texas where she earned her Ph.D. She was also the first recipient of the Texas Gifted Educator of the Year Award. Dr. Kingore and her husband are the parents of three sons whose needs and talents fuel her dedication to education. Recognized for her humorous and practical presentations, she advocates learning experiences that encourage high-level responses and high achievement from students while minimizing the intensity of teacher preparation time. Her energetic sessions leave teachers revitalized and eager to implement her shared ideas and learning experiences in their own classes. Her web site (www.BertieKingore.com) shares some of her recent articles of interest to educators and to parents. She also includes several teacher-requested activities.



Dr. Paul Slocumb

Dr. Paul Slocumb has spent his entire professional career working with students. Since 1966, he has dedicated himself to students and their families. His years of experience have given him unique insight on the academic, social and emotional issues of today's youth.



Dr. Slocumb earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Houston, master's degree in education from Sam Houston State University and a doctorate focusing on curriculum and instruction from the University of Houston/University Park.

His career highlights include serving as the deputy superintendent for curriculum and instruction, director of curriculum, supervisor of English Language Arts, campus administrator, and adjunct professor in curriculum and instruction for the gifted and talented.

Dr. Slocumb is the past president of the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented, and a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Phi Delta Kappa and the National Association for Gifted Children.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!

**NAGC'S 2008 ANNUAL CONVENTION
OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 2, 2008
TAMPA, FLORIDA**

Growing Gifted In The Sunshine State!

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