



ITAG/SAGE

Affiliate of The National Association
for Gifted Children



All the resources we need
are in the mind.
~Theodore Roosevelt

Many people die with their music still
in them. Why is this so? Too often it
is because they are always getting
ready to live. Before they know
it, time runs out.
~Oliver Wendell Holmes

The significant problems we face
cannot be solved by the same
level of thinking that
created them.
~Albert Einstein

ITAG/SAGE website
www.itag-sage.org

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Bring in the New Year: 2009 Summary of Activities *By Susan Wolfe, ITAG President 2009*



It's been a busy year for ITAG (Idaho – The Association for the Gifted).

As president, I wrote a letter extending our thanks to Superintendent Tom Luna for his support of efforts on behalf of talented and gifted students and educators in our state, and I urged his continued support of Idaho House Bill 669.

Known as the Advanced Opportunity Grant, this bill, in accordance with IDAPA 08.02.03, has allocated \$500,000 to provide advanced learning opportunities and to improve identification and service to gifted/talented students in the state.

ITAG sponsored the week-long Edufest Conference at BSU in July, serving as hosts for the Parent Institute and School Counselor/Psychologist Day during the conference. Gifted resource books were given away at the special one-day sessions.

ITAG joined NAGC (National Association for Gifted Children) and other affiliates in donating \$250 to sponsor a Nicholas Green Distinguished Student Award. Four \$200 mini-grants were offered to teachers who had creative and innovative ideas for projects involving gifted students in their classrooms. A \$100 Regional Meeting assistance was offered each region to support regional

collaboration. Regions 1 and 3 held meetings in their area.

The ITAG brochure and display board has been updated and restyled; the ITAG website will soon contain a curriculum link. The ITAG member list email server has been activated once again. Members are now automatically enrolled when they join ITAG. Superior newsletters were published with an extended distribution list throughout the state to those who might benefit from updated news and activities concerning gifted kids.

ITAG selected Dr. Lorna Finman as the recipient of the 2009 Gifted Education Milestone (GEM) Award. She is active in making a significant impact on science education for students, not only in North Idaho, but throughout the entire state. By personally sponsoring hundreds of student teams for the FIRST Robotics Competition, FIRST TECH Challenge, and FIRST Lego League, she has changed the lives of many students. Her efforts will undoubtedly influence the education and the lives of students, many of whom will enter fields in science, engineering, or robotics.

ITAG sponsored the Talented and Gifted portion of the 2009 Idaho CEC Conference. Idaho was honored to have Dr. Ann Robinson present on topics of building high quality programs and services for gifted and talented children and adolescents, engaging students by using evi-

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NAGC St. Louis Conference Intrigues and Inspires *by Bob Bishop*



When I signed up for the NAGC annual convention and exhibition in St. Louis I anticipated it for months. After meeting Ann Robinson, the NAGC president, as she taught in the Sun Valley last October I looked forward to other excellent workshops like the one she presented. At the St. Louis NAGC convention, there were 15 strands and more than 250 sessions. The variety of workshops would have kept any teacher intrigued and enthused for this fast paced four days of well organized sessions and exhibits.

One of the highlights was a highly interesting presentation by Josh Waitzkin (eight-time National Chess Champion and focus of the movie *Searching for Bobby Fischer*). Several years and many national championships later—in both chess and martial arts—Waitzen described what it meant to reach the highest level of achievement. The presentation consisted of a dialogue with Del Siegle, NAGC past President, Rena Subotnik, from the American Psychological Association, as well as local students who excel in areas such as chess, music, debate and acting. I, personally, found this as one of the most interesting presentations I have heard in a long time.

The focus was how learning something deeply can transfer into a further intense understanding of other subjects. In the case of Waitzen, his love and deep understanding of Chess transferred to a deep grasp of the martial art of Tai Chi Chuan. To the surprise of many, he did not promote the game of chess or put it on a pedestal as the cure-all for teaching. He realized that for him, Chess was his starting point that launched him into the art of learning.

In the words of Waitzen, “If I have learned anything in a lifetime of world-class competition, it is that learners and performers thrive when their growth process is uniquely tailored to their own personal nuance of character. Teachers must listen first. Students should gain a keen intro-

spective awareness of their natural strengths and weaknesses, and build a game, a career, a way of life around that awareness. In my careers in chess and the martial arts, and in my life as a teacher, I have seen too many learners, both adults and children, jammed into cookie cutter molds into which they just don’t fit. The result is a brittle, unsatisfying relationship to the growth process.”

Waitzen has started a foundation to promote a deep understanding of learning. Based on the book, *The Art of Learning*, the JW foundation seeks to apply his process to educational organizations around the world.

Waitzen speaks of his dream, “My philosophy of learning is based on maximizing each individual’s unique potential. The JW Foundation will reach out to as many children as possible, inspiring resilience, creativity, and a passion for the road to mastery. My systematic methodology for achieving this aim is the subject of my book *The Art of Learning*. It is my intention, with the JW Foundation, to

help that process. In time, we will develop a comprehensive online learning environment that will be a resource for teachers, parents, and students alike. While the top priority of the JW Foundation will be under-served communities, it is my ambition to support all children, teens, and young adults on their unique paths to excellence.

It was my pleasure to spend many hours with Waitzen during and after his presentations to discuss application of his ideas to gifted education.

Another highlight was the general session with Howard Gardner. He is well known to most teachers as the developer of the theory of Multiple Intelligences in addition to being the author of more than 20 books.

For this thought-provoking presentation, Gardner drew from decades of experience and research of his theories. His humor and insights brought a compelling message on how giftedness, talent and creativity play an important role in the classroom. Gardner’s newest book, *Five Minds for the Future* outlines the specific cognitive abilities that will be sought and cultivated by leaders in the years ahead: the disciplined mind, the synthesizing mind, the creating mind, the respectful mind, and the ethical mind.

The afternoon held a memorable dialogue with Howard Gardner and Dean Keith Simonton. This humorous and inspiring

dialogue was moderated by Ann Robinson. The topic focused on the nature of creative genius as described in the biographies of Beethoven, Marie Curie, Einstein, T.S. Elliot and Picasso. I listened

to this presentation sitting next to Dr. Joseph S. Renzulli. We both were enthralled with the insights and both gave the speakers an



(Continued on page 3)



TAG and NAGC offer three Webinars on RTI

January 27, 5pm

Overview of RTI for Gifted Education

Mary Ruth Coleman, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Susan Johnsen, Baylor University, Waco, Texas

Part 1 of a 3-part series: The origins of RTI will be briefly reviewed and the applications for gifted education will be explored. The discussion will focus on: early intervention to support strengths; screening, assessment, and progress monitoring; use of Standard protocols; and collaborative problem-solving approaches with parental involvement. A joint NAGC/TAG position paper on RTI will be presented.

February 24, 5 pm

Gifted Models that Fit within an RTI Framework

Mary Ruth Coleman, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Sneha Shah-Coltrane, NC Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, NC; Joe Renzulli, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT; George Betts, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO

Part 2: We will examine how three models for gifted education fit within an RTI approach. U-STARs-PLUS, a nurturing program for children in grades K-3; the Schoolwide Enrichment Program; and the Autonomous Learner Model will be briefly presented. Focus of the discussion will be how these approaches could be used within the RTI framework.

March 24, 5 pm

Getting Started at the State & District Levels with RTI

Mary Ruth Coleman, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC; Lauri Kirsch, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Tampa, FL; Elizabeth Shaunessey, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

Part 3: We will look at implementing RTI for gifted education at the state and district levels. Registration information is available at <https://www.nagc.org/>

Biography “Magic Books”



If you have ever taken the BER class given by Kay Law on Differentiated Teaching Strategies for GT then you may have heard of her **Magic Books**. These books are made from 1 ½ file folders which creates an extra hidden page in the middle. (See page 188 in her resource handbook listed below.)

Students think these magic books are super cool! I have my students do a biography report in November. Biographies are a great way for GT students to learn about characteristics that helped other “gifted” people succeed in the past.

Characteristics such as perseverance, risk-taking, problem solving, or prioritizing are an important life lesson. Each student picks a famous person to read about (I use a set of biographies called “Who Was . . .”) and then does research on five areas of that person’s life.

Next I have them type up their notes in a table in Word under each of the five headings. (Headings are Childhood, Problems encountered, successes, family, End of life/death.)

They then print these off and cut apart each square to glue onto a square in the magic book. Finally they go online and copy pictures into a Word document which they can then print and add to the cover and sides of the book.

When their book is done they have to write a speech incorporating each of the five subheadings of their research.

We always have a two-day share time when younger classes can come in and hear their one minute

speech about their famous person. This is a long term project but the students learn about research, facts, organizing data, giving a speech and sharing new knowledge with their community. I hope you can also find a use for these wonderful “Magic Books”.

Law, Kay. (1995-2006). *Strengthening Instruction for Gifted Students Through Differentiated Teaching Strategies*. Bureau of Education and Research. www.ber.org

(Continued from page 2: NAGC Conference)
enthusiastic standing ovation.

These general sessions, the plethora of workshops by authors, speakers and scholars in the field of gifted education and the 100 exhibits made this an excellent convention. In addition, the excursions of historical St. Louis culminating at the St. Louis arch made this NAGC convention trip a memorable and educational experience.

(Continued from page 1: Summary of ITAG)
dence-based instructional practices such as implementation of primary sources, and utilizing biography in the classroom.

New and returning ITAG Executive Board members and regional representatives are an active, integral part of the organization. Go to the ITAG website to contact your region’s representative, or the webmaster to join the ITAG list server at <http://itag-sage.org>.

Books for Young Precocious Readers: Spotting the Rare Birds by Angie Young

Recently I had an incident with a gifted third grade reader. His mom had sent back to school a book that I had loaned him with a note saying her son did not want to finish the book because he was upset and unable to sleep. It had been a while since I'd read the book myself, so I racked my brain trying to think of what might have been bothering my student about *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, by Selznick. Was the hiding and possibility of being caught causing anxious feelings?

After a quick call to the mom I pulled the little boy into my office to ask him about his experience with the story. Always trying to be careful to pick just the right books with challenging vocabulary and social appropriate themes for younger precocious reader, I wondering where I'd fallen short. I wanted to let him know that he always has the right as a reader to stop reading and I wanted to hear from him what had bothered him.

Big tears began to well up in his eyes as we began to talk. I apologized to him and told him, "Bud, I'm so sorry. I didn't think about it being too scary for you." Through the tears he looked up at me indignantly. "It wasn't too scary! I just couldn't stop feeling so bad for the kid." Ah, the moment of truth. The sensitivities of a young precocious reader were staring me in the face. They are such hard things to predict and so specific to the topic and student.

We talked for a few more minutes and after visiting found that at this point he was really looking for more fun and adventure. But the conversation got me thinking. I'm constantly asked by parents and teachers for recommendations of books their children might like, or titles that might give them a taste of another genre apart from the steady diet of fantasy

they are gorging on. How *do* you find books for young precocious readers?

Dr. Ann Robinson and her colleagues in *Best Practices in Gifted Education* (2007) recommend that when choosing books for young readers we need to keep in mind that the book "(a) should tell a good story, (b) have strong characters with which children can identify, (c) be open-ended enough to require interpretation, evaluation, or problem-solving, (d) include a variety of literature and high-interest nonfiction, and (e) feature language that is varied and rich" (p. 550). These are excellent guides to use, but much like a bird watcher with an Audu-

bon guidebook in hand, books for your precocious readers can be rare birds, elusive, but wonderful to find. And usually the best way to spot one is to ask another watcher who can point you in the right direction.

So this space is open to all book watchers; teachers, parents and students alike. What titles have you found that fit the criteria above, particularly to students ages 5-9? If you have a one book, or a flock, please email the title and author, and a very brief recommendation to young@msd134.org. We hope to compile a list here to point out those rare birds to one another.

Don't miss this outstanding summer opportunity to learn how to better work with gifted and talented students



Who you've missed if you haven't attended Edufest over the last 13 years

Keynote and Special Event Speakers from Edufest 1997-2009

Join us
July 25-30, 2010
Boise, Idaho

Terry Armstrong * Susan Baum * Kris Berman * Ernesto Bernal * George Betts * Deborah Burns * Carolyn Callahan * Susan Casey * Xavier Castellanos * Art Costa * Bonnie Cramond * Mary Ruth Coleman * Tracy Cross * Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi * Jeff Danielian * Felicia Dixon * Tamara Fisher * Jerry Flack * Francois Gagne * Marcia Gentry * Temple Grandin * Robert Greenleaf * Anthony Gregorc * E. Jean Gubbins * Kris Haslund * Tom Hébert * Brian Housand * Angela Housand * Scott Hunsaker * Marcia Imbeau * Karen Isaacson * Nancy Johnson * Sandra Kaplan * Felice Kaufmann * Crystal Kuryendahl * Jann Leppien * Steven Levy * Margo Long * C. June Maker * Rachel McAnallen * D. Betsy McCoach * Hank Nicols * Jean Petersen * Jonathan Plucker * Jeanne Purcell * Sally Reis * Joseph Renzulli * Susannah Richards * Larry Rogien * Hunter Scott * Sylvia Rimm * Nancy Robinson * Robin Schader * Pat Schuler * Del Siegle * Linda Silverman * Mary Slade * Alane Starko * Robert Sternberg * Roger Taylor * Michael Clay Thompson * Carol Ann Tomlinson * Donald Treffinger * Joyce VanTassel-Baska * Cloyce Weaver * James Webb *

Karen Westberg

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Edufest is a week-long summer conference that will change the way you teach.
Visit www.edufest.org for 2010 Program Information.



Congressional Update

By Jane Clarenbach

U.S. Commitment to Gifted Students Severely Lacking, New Report Finds

WASHINGTON (November 12, 2009) – The U.S. education system neglects the needs of our gifted and talented students, leaving the nation ill-prepared to identify and effectively serve high-potential students, a new survey reports.

The report – 2008-2009 State of the States in Gifted Education by the National

Association for Gifted Children and the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted finds a fragmented collection of policies and resources that vary greatly between states and local districts and that are almost universally underfunded and under-resourced. More than a quarter of all states provided no funding for gifted students during the last school year, and most high-potential students are taught by teachers with little to no training in gifted education, the report concludes.

"At a time when other nations are redoubling their commitment to their highest potential students, the United States continues to neglect the needs of this student population, a policy failure that will cost us dearly in the years to come," said Dr. Ann Robinson, President of the National Association for Gifted Children and Director of the Center for Gifted Education at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

"The solution to this problem must be a comprehensive national gifted and talented education policy in which federal, state, and local districts work together to ensure all gifted students are identified and served by prop-

erly trained teachers using appropriate curriculum," Robinson added.

A Nationwide Lack of Commitment

Of the states that reported funding for gifted students, per-pupil expenditure varied sharply from \$2 to \$750 for the 2008-2009 school year. Only 5 states require teachers to receive any preparation on gifted students before entering the classroom. Even for instructors teaching in specialized gifted programs, only 5 states require annual professional development for them.

"Most gifted students spend the majority of their school days in general education classrooms, receiving little specialized instruction per week. The fact that most states do not require classroom teachers to have any exposure to the unique learning needs of gifted children means the majority of high-potential students are not being taught by appropriately trained teachers," Robinson noted.

Uneven Services

The report also found that in most states, even those that define giftedness and mandate services, key policies pertaining to gifted education are set exclusively at the local district level.

"The lack of leadership and failure to hold districts accountable for serving gifted students by Washington and the states has produced a largely uneven and inconsistent delivery system, said Nancy Green, NAGC Executive Director. "For every local district making an outstanding commitment to gifted learners, we have scores of districts doing nothing."

Impact on the Nation

The ramifications of the nation's underinvestment in gifted education is evidenced in many areas including continued underperformance on international benchmarks, particularly in math, science, and engineering, and in the shortage of qualified workers able to enter professions that require advanced skills.

"Forty years ago, we realized the impact of a sustained commitment to academic excellence when we celebrated the landing of a man on the moon.

State Department News Gifted/Talented District Plans Due in 2010

By Val Schorzman



Updated district G/T plans will be due in the fall of 2010. Remember that each

plan must have the following:

- ◆ Philosophy
- ◆ Definition of giftedness
- ◆ Program goals
- ◆ Program options
- ◆ Identification procedures
- ◆ Eligibility (including criteria and assessment)
- ◆ Program evaluation
- ◆ Name and position of program supervisor .

In many districts, program options have changed since 2007. The ideal time for your district to begin reviewing your plan is now. *The Best Practices Manual for Gifted and Talented Programs in Idaho, A Guide for Starting and Improving Gifted and Talented High School Programs and Gifted and Talented Primary Age Students* are valuable resources.

If you cannot locate your copies, they are available on the G/T Website on the Manuals page. If you have any questions, please call Val Schorzman at 208-332-6920 or e-mail VJSchorzman@sde.idaho.gov

Future breakthroughs and discovery in science, medicine, and technology will be impossible if we fail to identify and serve today's brightest young minds. The time to act is now," Robinson said.

For the full State of the States report, go to: <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=5364>

Idaho Gem Award

Dr. Lorna Finman

Community member Dr. Lorna Finman was presented the Gem Award at the CEC Conference in Sun Valley in October. Dr. Finman, from Post Falls, is active in making a significant impact on science education for students, not only in North Idaho, but throughout the entire state.

Dr. Finman personally sponsors hundreds of students on teams for the FIRST Robotics Competition, FIRST TECH Challenge, and FIRST Lego League. She has changed the lives of these students and will directly impact their futures, many of whom will enter fields in science, engineering or robotics solely because of this experience provided by Dr. Finman.

She is sponsoring robotics summer camps for students, which will deepen their enthusiasm for science and engineering. In addition, she is building a huge science center complex in the Coeur d' Alene area, which will have three sections: robotics activities, hands-on science center activities, and laboratories for students and teachers to conduct real-world science research.

Dr. Finman has been a judge for the Regional Invent Idaho competition. Lorna worked tirelessly to assist a Post Falls robotics team to complete its robot for the FIRST Robotics Competition, where they finished 9th out of 51 teams in the whole northwest. Finally, by providing the FIRST Lego League opportunity for students, one team of fifth graders had the amazing opportunity, after winning the State competition, to be selected as one of only six teams to present their research solution at the Children's Climate Call in Copenhagen, Denmark.

There is simply no other single individual in this state who is currently having as much impact on students' education as Dr. Lorna Finman.

ITAG/SAGE Executive Board

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TAG Symposium CEC Convention & Expo April 21–24, 2010; Nashville, TN

Make plans to attend CEC's annual convention in Nashville. Be sure you get signed up to attend the TAG Symposium, held on April 21 from 9:00 am—3:30 pm.

Meeting the Needs of Gifted Students Within an RTI Framework

As a field, all educators need to be aware of school practices that affect students who are gifted and talented. One of these practices is Response to Intervention. What RTI models are effective with students with gifts and talents? How are students who are gifted and talented identified—particularly those who have disabilities? How might activities be differentiated at each of the

tiers? How might educators collaborate in developing services for students with disabilities and those with gifts and talents? This symposium will examine these questions from a variety of perspectives.

Issues regarding identification, classroom practices, implementation, policy, and challenges will be addressed by a panel of experts during the morning.

Participants will then have an opportunity to work in small groups to address the issues raised by the morning speakers and identify specific strategies that will be helpful in meeting the needs of students with gifts and talents within an RTI framework.

Registration available at www.cec.sped.org

ITAG/SAGE Helps Fund Regional Meetings

ITAG has appropriated \$100 annually per region to help support regional facilitator meetings. Regions are divided roughly as North, Eastern, and Southwestern.

Regional meetings are usually held two or three times a year, hosted by a different district each time. The meetings are a time when area facilitators can network, share informa-

tion, bring in speakers, and do planning for regional activities.

To apply, send your name, address, phone, email, district # and write a brief description of intended meeting dates, location, and topics of discussion to: Scarlett Randall Scarlett.randall@boiseschools.org 2389 W. Cogburn, Meridian, ID 83642

Mini Grants Available

Four mini grants were awarded this fall: Adventures in Art—supplies for a variety of media and art criticism; School Newspaper—digital camera; Stock Market Game—enrollment fees; and Leadership Training for Kids—materials and books.

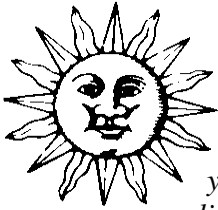
Up to six mini-grants in the amount of \$200 or less will be provided this year for innovative ideas that promote gifted education in schools and benefit gifted children.

The grants are intended to help fund projects that provide direct support for programs and/or materials for gifted children. However, ideas that indirectly benefit gifted children will also be considered. Applicants must be ITAG/SAGE members to be considered.

Check the ITAG/SAGE website for more information and application forms. www.itag-sage.org

Creative Learning with Creative Lives

By Susan Wolfe



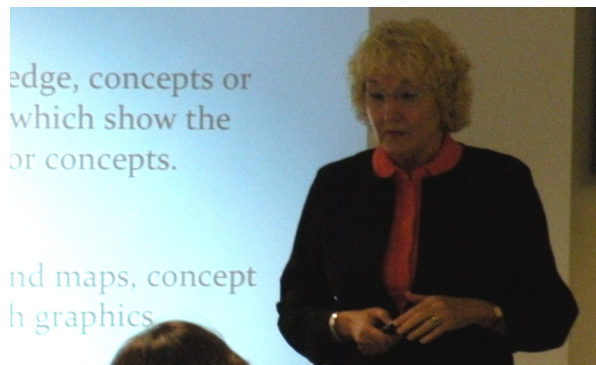
Mark Twain said, "There was never yet an uninteresting life. Such a thing is impossibility. Inside of the dullest exterior there is drama, a comedy, and a tragedy."

The presentations at the CEC conference in Sun Valley this year were rich!

In one of her three ITAG strands, Dr. Ann Robinson presented "Creative Lives: Blueprints for Biography." With her wealth of ideas and curriculum to get students excited about history and writing, Dr. Robinson demonstrates the integration of the language arts into the curriculum. Dr. Robinson demonstrated how to use Primary Sources in the classroom. Her reasoning: "Biography has the immediacy of good storytelling and the analytical stance of history."

Biographies in the classroom inspire curiosity and empathy and provide a rich source of role models for talented readers to explore. An effective use of creativity steeped in rigor. Imagine you are Mary Kingsley and you need to persuade the Royal Geographical Society to fund your return to Africa...or a sales representative for the John B. Stetson Company in which your job is to convince owners and managers of clothing stores in Colorado Territory to buy the "Boss of the Plains" hats to sell to their customers.

When paired with her strand "Picture This!" participants saw how Primary Sources, such as historical photographs, become even more powerful by capturing the essence of a historical time period. They excite student observation and research skills. Dr. Robinson also shared supplemental materials for encouraging creativity and how to build programs and services for gifted and talented children -- specifically highlighting evidence-



based practices to incorporate into your services.

If you missed out, you may want to check out her 2006 text, Best Practices in Gifted Education: An Evidence-based Guide. This guide summarizes 29 practices, with research support, for use with high ability learners. Over half of them are instructional and curricular practices and include content specific pedagogy in reading, language arts, history, inquiry-based science, mathematics, the arts, and career education.

Networking opportunities, classroom ideas steeped in best practice, beautiful and famous Sun Valley Resort! It was so wonderful to see educators out in force this year at the CEC Sun Valley Conference 2009! See you next year!

ITAG Election Results

Becky Macaw is our new ITAG Vice President

Becky currently teaches first and second graders in a full time gifted classroom in the Boise School District. Always an advocate for the gifted children in her regular classroom, she was recently motivated to earn a state endorsement in gifted education in order to provide the kind of education and environment this often overlooked population deserves.

Ms. Macaw grew up in Idaho, graduating from Boise State University with a BA in Elementary Education, and a Masters Degree in Education Administration from the University of Idaho. She started teaching 22 years ago, and has taught every grade from first to eighth. She enjoys horseback riding, reading and beekeeping. Becky lives in Eagle with her husband and three sons.

Linda Hawley was reelected as ITAG's Secretary

Linda has taught G/T in the Idaho Falls pullout program (PACE) since 1992 where third, fourth fifth, and sixth grade identified gifted students participate one day each week. Previous to that I taught fourth and fifth grades for 11 years along with Future Problem Solving with selected fourth grade students. I love G/T students, especially their uniqueness and great senses of humor. I have five children and fifteen (soon to be sixteen) grandchildren, several of whom are gifted and fill my life with "interesting opportunities".

GT Endorsement Update

Jo Henderson is still teaching the GT Endorsement courses online through BSU. She also continually conducts the GT Practicum through NNU (not an online course). It is worked out individually between Jo and the participant. People can email Jo with questions and a schedule at johender@gmail.com

IDAHO, THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE GIFTED/
STATE ADVOCATES FOR GIFTED EDUCATION

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*Challenging all Children
to Maximize their Potential*

ITAG/SAGE 2010 Winter Newsletter