Tag Line

Issue 3, July 2004

The newsletter of the Round Rock Talented and Gifted Association

Calendar of Events

Saturday, Aug 7
TAGCon and Book Exchange.

Monday, Aug 16
RRISD first day of school.

October/November
Nominations for RRISD Tag program. Check with your school.

November 3-7
National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
51st Annual Convention
"Inspiring Vistas, Inspiring Minds"
Salt Lake City, Utah
www.NAGC.org

November 18-20
Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT)
27th Annual Professional Development Conference for Educators and Parents.
"Enriching the Legacy"
Dallas Convention Center
Dallas, Texas
www.txgifted.org

Renew your membership today!

TAGCon and Book Exchange

Saturday, Aug 7, 1-5 pm
Clay Madsen Recreation Center
1600 Gattis School Road

Before school starts up again, let your gifted kid spend a fun afternoon at the TAGCon and Book Exchange Day. Come and go as you please. Your child is encouraged to invite another gifted child. Siblings are welcome too.

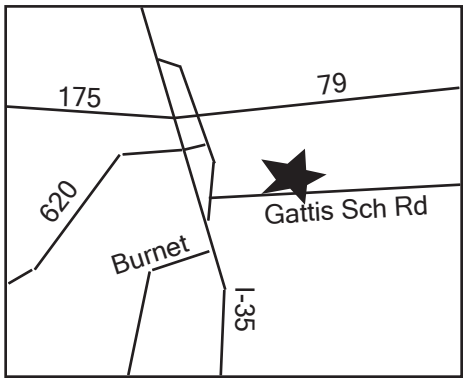
TAGCon

Games for all age ranges -- simple enough for the young ones to learn, but still challenging for the older ones: Mastermind, Turnabout, Taboo, Pi (a multi-player chess game), Puerto Rico, Warhammer 40K. Adults will be on hand to teach students how to play the games.

Book Exchange

Every year, TAG students are required to read a number of books for English and Literature. Participate in our book exchange and save some money. Bring your gently-used novels - the required-reading or just-for-pleasure books - and exchange them with other students. You get a ticket for every book you bring in and each ticket entitles you to exchange for another book. This is a first time for us so we will see how it works out.

Standard books assigned: *Where the Red Fern Grows, Bridge to Terabithia, Silas Marner, The House of Spirits, Frankenstein, Oliver Twist, Cyrano De Bergerac, Les Miserables, Charlotte's Web, A Wrinkle in Time, The Velveteen Rabbit, The Wind in the Willows, Old Yeller, The Cat in the Hat, Where the Wild Things Are, The Ugly Duckling, Animal Farm, Brave New World, Antigone, Grapes of Wrath, Gulliver's Travels, Illiad, Jane Eyre, Leaves of Grass, Lord of the Flies, The Little Prince, Narcissus and Goldmund, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, The Scarlet Letter, A Tale of Two Cities, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, The Three Musketeers.*



Underachievement: why it happens to talented students

A summary of research by Karen E. Ablard

Achievement of Goals and Implicit Theories of Intelligence
Among Academically Talented Students
Journal for the Education of the Gifted
Vol. 25, No. 3, 2002, pp 215-232

Talented and gifted students are often assumed to be high achievers who love a good challenge, are eager for new tasks, stay engaged and persist to the end. Yet, it has been observed that some academically talented students shy away from difficult tasks, and if absolutely required to do them, will find the easiest way to complete them.

This was the phenomenon that Karen E Ablard, Senior Researcher at the Center for Talented Youth, Johns Hopkins University, chose to investigate. Why do some talented students underachieve relative to their intellectual abilities? What motivates some students to achieve, while others of comparable talent, lack the motivation?

Previous research have shown that achievement motivation is a complex construct that is mediated by self-processes. Those self-processes include how students perceive their competence, what they attribute success to, and how they orient their goals.

Given the great concern that educators and researchers have about the underachievement of our most promising students, Ablard chose specifically to research the orientation of goals among academically talented students.

Achievement goals, Ablard explains, can be placed into two categories: learning goals and performance goals.

Students with learning goals focus on understanding their subject of interest. They want to learn even when their performance is poor. They are more concerned with mastery than with performance and they show persistence when challenged and increase effort after failure. Learning-goal students tend to be self-regulated. They use elaboration strategies and process information deeply, both of which contribute to long-term retention of knowledge and subsequent high achievement.

Students with performance goals are concerned with overt accomplishments. They tend to believe that poor performance indicates low academic ability. According to Ablard, these students typically choose tasks in which they are more likely to succeed, which tend to be easy or at the students' perceived ability level. Likewise, they tend to avoid challenges to prevent failure and negative evaluation of their ability.

When performance goals are accompanied by low confidence, students' display a sense of helplessness. They do not exert effort in the belief that they have no control over the outcome, and they develop self-handicapping behavior.

Ablard points out that, in order to understand achievement goals, one also has to consider students' individual beliefs about intelligence. Researchers refer to these beliefs as their implicit theories of intelligence (ITI). Students subscribe to one of two views: either that inteliigence is a fixed entity or that intelligence is incremental, i.e, the more you learn, the more your intelligence increases. Previous research showed that students who

believed in entity intelligence were more concerned with how well they performed and not what they might learn. They also avoided challenging tasks.

On the other hand, students who believed that intelligence is incremental in nature, focused their efforts on learning, and tried hard after failure. They were more motivated and self-confident.

Noting that achievement goals vary among even the academically talented, Ablard set out to empirically measure the distribution, strengths and combinations of these two goals among 425 eighth graders all of whom were either at or above the 97th percentile. How are achievement goals related to one's belief about intelligence? Are their gender differences in achievement goals? What is the strongest predictor of future underachievement?

The students in Ablard's study were asked to complete a questionnaire made up of different scales: an Adjective Check List, a Task-Orientation scale, an Ability-Orientation scale, and a 3-question scale that assessed students' beliefs about their intelligence.

As expected, Ablard found that acievement goals did vary among academically talented students. No student showed one absolute preference for one kind of goal over another. All students endorsed both, but at different degrees of preference. And there was no systematic relationship between the two. Knowing the strength of one goal did not predict the strength of the other.

Forty-four percent (44%) of the students strongly endorsed learning goals, and they described themselves as "assertive, confident, ambitious, determined, enterprising, conscientious, and painstaking." (JEG, Vol 25, no. 3, 2002, p222).

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the students strongly endorsed performance goals and they tended to describe themselves as "aggressive, argumentative, opinionated, confident, determined, forceful and a show-off." (p 223)

Interestingly, 4.4 percent of the students surveyed indicated endorsement of moderate performance goals accompanied by a belief that they were not at all intelligent or only somewhat intelligent. This is the group, Ablard asserts, at highest risk of underachievement. The 25 percent who sttrongly endorsed performance goals, Ablard believes, are at possible risk of future underachievement,

There were no significant differences in gender and the learning-goal group was found to be significantly related to ITI.

In her discussion of the results, Ablard points out that one cannot conclude that learning goals are always beneficial and performance goals are always detrimental, because much depends on how the students adjust, or not, according to circumstances. Ablard gives the example of students with very strong learning goals and very weak performance goals who may choose to expend great amounts of energy into their areas of interest, without regard to grades. In this situation, they could underachieve in the area of course content. On the other hand, these same students could also choose to temporarily forgo their learning goals in order to achieve good grades.

In another example, Ablard points out that performance-goal students can increase the use of rehearsal strategies to increase their short-term performance, heading off underachievement.

The most important contribution that Ablard's research makes to the education of our children is understanding how our efforts to challenge them can yield two very different responses depending on our students' achievement goals. Ablard points out that acceleration and enrichment opportunies are great for learning-goal students. But performance-goal students may resist efforts by teachers and parents to put them in challenging environments for fear of failure.

Summarized by Na-Shuang Freeburg.

Bridging the gap

Campus Representatives *badly* needed !!!

ATTENTION PARENTS:
Help us strengthen the RRTAGA by being the Campus Representative for your child's school.

This is an important position. It is a vital connection between the association and the school and parents. RRTAGA wants to improve the flow of communication all around. It has to be able to hear from the parents and teachers, and likewise, to be able to inform parents of what's happening in the area of school finance, quality of delivery and research in gifted education.

The campus representative is that one person who can best facilitate this communication. This is not a time consuming position but it is critical to RRTAGA and ultimately to the quality and even the survival of the TAG program in our district.

Of the 40 schools in the RRISD, we have only two campus reps, one each for Pond Springs Elementary and Forest North Elementary. ***Would you seriously consider being a campus representative?***

Training, guidance and support will be provided by our Campus Rep Coordinator and members of the Board.

Brief description of responsibilities:

- Establish contact with TAG teachers, TAG room teachers and as much as possible, parents of TAG students.
- Inform/remind teachers and parents of RRTAGA meetings and student events.
- Help RRTAGA distribute newsletter and other communication.
- Keep RRTAGA informed, in general terms, of parent concerns.
- Contribute ideas on how RRTAGA can best serve teachers, parents and students.
- Attend as many Board Meetings as possible. (Board meetings are held once a month when school is in session.)

For more information, please contact Jenn, the Campus Rep Coordinator, at jennfungyu@yahoo.com.

We're looking forward to hearing from you!!!

A new website under construction

Blake Freeburg has come on board as our new Webmaster. He has secured for the asociation the domain name RRTAGA which will simplify members' and public access to our new website at www.rrtaga.org.

Welcome new Board members

Jenn Fung Ip
Campus Rep Coordinator
Na-Shuang Freeburg
Public Relations
Blake Freeburg
Webmaster

Board positions still open

Positions still open are Legislation, Community Resources, Fine Arts, and Scholarships.

If you're interested in any of these positions, contact Joanna Chavez, president, at rrtaga@yahoo.com.

Status of new TAG director hiring

It appears that the position of Director of Gifted and Advanced Academic Services for RRISD is still vacant. Wayne Craigen, the former director, retired this past May.

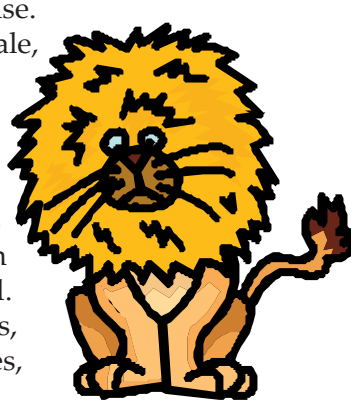
We will update you in the next newsletter.

Renew your membership today!

A World of Animals

by Vincent Ip
Pond springs Elementary

Mighty can they be.
Fast like a cheetah,
Slow as a tortoise.
Huge like a whale,
Tiny as a fly.
I do have some favorites,
though.
Sharks in the sea,
Falcons in the sky,
But most of my favorites are on
the ground.
Tigers, jaguars,
Bears, horses,
And lots more that I like.
Some are fierce like the lion,
Some are shy like the hermit crab.
The animal kingdom is so large,
And really amazing, too.
Animals, animals,
A world of animals.



This poem was first published in The Elementary School Writer, 2003-2004, #1.

tell us something about yourself ...

yes! it's occurred to us (the folks on the Board) that we know so little about our members. given that there is a genetic component to giftedness, we must conclude that we are not tapping into a huge talent pool, otherwise known as parents of tag kids. please help us rectify this situation. tell us something about yourself! Of course, it's all optional, but we'd sure appreciate your obliging us with the information.

	Father	Mother
Name	_____	_____
Profession	_____	_____
Hobbies/Special Interests	_____	_____
Country of Birth	_____	_____

Something you especially want us to know about you ... _____

_____

Mail to RRTAGA membership, 8805 ElkhornMountain Trail, Austin, TX 78729

have you seen what's on the other side of this page?

Round Rock Talented and Gifted Association
8005 Elkhorn Mountain Trail
Austin, TX 78729

Time to renew your membership!

The RRTAGA supports gifted education for students in the Round Rock ISD. The $15 yearly family membership is our only source of income and is used to produce newsletters, student scholarships and activity days for students.
Please renew your membership to the RRTAGA and help make all this possible.
Thank you!

RRTAGA Membership Renewal
School Year 2004-2005

Name _____

Address _____

Home phone _____ Email address _____

Please list school age children enrolled in the TAG progrm.

Name _____ Grade _____ School _____

Name _____ Grade _____ School _____

Name _____ Grade _____ School _____

Membership dues: $15 per family per year
Make check payable to RRTAGA
Mail to RRTAGA Membership, 8005 Elkhorn Mountain Trail, Austin, TX 78729

Have you looked on the other side of this page?