



Aug. 8, 2013

Department: Teachers Corner



Jeff Danielian, NAGC Teacher Resource Specialist and editor, *Teaching for High Potential* Is It August Already?

With the first days of school just a short time away for many of us, even the most seasoned teacher feels a variety of emotions. I am about to embark on my 15th year of teaching. While I am excited for the hustle and bustle of the daily planning, instructing, evaluating, and encouraging my students, I still feel a bit of hesitation about getting to know a whole new group of students. They come to me with different interests, learning styles, and preferences, from a variety of backgrounds, situations, and experiences. Apart from instruction and skill development, they will need individualized attention when it comes to their affective needs.

I have come to realize that each year is like beginning anew. The material and overall theme of each unit of instruction does seem to resonate over the years; however, the experience for those seated before me is always different. Questions dictate discussion. Preferences and attitudes determine group dynamic. Levels of knowledge demonstrate competency and as students become comfortable with the material, the information uncovered and creative problem solving is often times unique in nature. Each day becomes full of excitement and challenge.

Many readers can relate to this annual ebb and flow of the educational profession, but there are others who will step into a classroom for the very first time. While many of them have been made aware of “what to look for” in all of their students, research has shown that many entering the field do not possess the simple curricular planning, affective infusion, and overall awareness of characteristics needed to create an atmosphere of learning for “all” students.

A visit to a summer conference or other professional development opportunity can enrich any educator, regardless of the years of experience.

I had the pleasure of both presenting and attending two of the largest summer gifted conferences in the country, [Confratute](#), at the University of Connecticut and [Edufest](#), on the campus of Boise State in Idaho. During my time there, I talked with hundreds of educators, sharing information, stories, and ideas. I was motivated and inspired by the variety of keynotes, presentations, and workshops, and I will make it a point to spread the tools and messages I gained. I see it as my responsibility to current and future gifted and high-ability students.

As long as those involved in the field of gifted education, at every level, continually search for ways to uncover, develop, and encourage students with high potential, resources intended to educate and inform will be accessed and disseminated. Some of the best resources the field has to offer can be found in the [NAGC Back-to-School Toolkit](#). This toolkit organizes some of the newest “Best of the Best” resources, also re-introducing you to what the NAGC website has to offer. There is truly something for everyone.

Have a great start to the school year! I hope to see many of you at the [NAGC Annual Convention](#) in Indianapolis.

Till September...