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Who Is Going to Fill Our Shoes? The Graying of Our Profession and NAITTE

As a reader of the *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education (JITE)* and possibly a NAITTE member, when you look back over your career, you may reflect positively on your early involvement in professional organizations. Individually, we who are reading *JITE* have probably made commitments to NAITTE and other closely related professional organizations throughout our careers. Now we need to urge others to share in those commitments.

Even though young people continue to join our faculties, we should be disquieted by the graying of our profession and our professional organization, knowing, as we do, that we need to be preparing our leadership successors. Rather than hoping that those new to the profession will discover on their own the importance of becoming members of professional organizations, we need to take active roles in assisting them. Both seasoned veterans and those in the early stages of their careers can encourage their peers to join professional organizations.

There are numerous ways we can help prospective members recognize the benefits of membership in NAITTE. For example, if you are a teacher education professor, why not introduce your students to *JITE*? By doing so you may lay the footing for your students to value the voice of research-based expertise in their future teaching practices.

Another method of encouragement is to model involvement in professional organizations. I am often caught off guard when I catch those new to the profession observing and reflecting on my behavior. You can be a valuable role model by sharing articles from *JITE* and by discussing new ideas you bring back from our annual conferences. When you are enthusiastic, you can't help but infect others with the same professional spirit.

New professionals may feel uneasy in proposing conference sessions on their own; however, conference participation can lead to a lifetime of involvement. Why not invite a new professional to present with you at NAITTE each

December? Consider including them by helping them write their proposals, or writing the proposals yourself. Appearing on the program will get them to the conference, and from personal experience, I know after the first time I appeared with my mentor at an event I was hooked.

Besides being uneasy about presenting at conferences, new professionals often lack the discretionary income to participate in organizations or events. Perhaps as a long-time member you could give someone the gift of NAITTE membership. Or how about sharing your hotel room at the national conference? Another way to help young faculty is to assist them in the process of requesting institutional monetary support. Sometimes they may not be aware of funding that is available or how to get through the red tape in processing paperwork.

Another approach, the gift of inclusion, can be more significant than the gift of money. New professionals may feel like outsiders to the profession, and therefore they need invitations into the “insider” group of those who attend the NAITTE conference. Why not make a commitment to bring a new professional into the fold?

I’d like to suggest one more critical element in growing and maintaining NAITTE; the continuance of *JITE*. While members express that the *Journal* should be a priority of NAITTE, I am sorry to report that for whatever reason, our submission of quality manuscripts has dropped significantly. Previous editors of the *Journal* (Custer, 1997; Hoepfl, 2001; Rogers, 2003) reported the same phenomenon.

As editor, it is my hope that you will make it a priority to submit an article for Volume 43 or to assist a new scholar in converting his or her dissertation into a research article. The editorial board will guide and assist you with this important endeavor. It’s time to act to bring new voices and new life blood to our *Journal* and to our NAITTE organization.

In This Issue

This issue of *JITE* focuses on change. In the feature article, Charles Gagel, University of Idaho, reports the findings of the NAITTE 2004 membership survey. To provide perspective to the findings, Gagel integrates the data with a comparison to the

1993 NAITTE membership survey. Gagel points out that NAITTE has made changes over its 69 years of existence to respond to changing times and needs to continue to be responsive and change again in order to survive.

After receiving and accepting Gagle's article, the *JITE* editorial board invited responses by three NAITTE leaders – past, current, and future. The next three articles are those responses. Dan Brown, Illinois State University, the current President of NAITTE, examines the historical perspectives of NAITTE and offers possible courses of action for the organization. Next, Mary Jo Self, Oklahoma State University, President-Elect of NAITTE, shares her perspectives of the future of the organization. In the third response, David C. Bjorkquist, University of Minnesota, long-time NAITTE member, reflects upon changes in our profession and encourages us to continue to change and move proudly to our next phase.

In keeping with the theme of change, the usage trends of online course development in technical teacher education programs is the focus of the article by Arnold K. Murdock, University of North Carolina-Wilmington. To develop an understanding of online course development trends, faculty in all institutions listed in the 2002 NAITTE directory were polled. Recommendations for practice are included, based on an analysis of the responses to survey items.

The name “Technology Education” is questioned by Ben Spencer and George Rogers, Purdue University, in the “At Issue” section. The authors explore the benefits, alternatives, and consequences of a name change and its potential impact on the field of technology education.

Brendan Calandra, Georgia State University, provides a review of the *Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning* edited by R. E. Mayer. Multimedia learning is an emerging field which continues to grow with the advances in computer graphics and visualization technologies and will continue to impact our future both in what we do in our own technical fields and in our teaching practices.

Following is the *Journal's* "Bits and Pieces" section which contains information for submitting articles to the *Journal* and how to become a member of NAITTE.

JZB

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