

The International Technology Education Association (ITEA): A Prominent Voice for Technology Education

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This article is one of a continuing series on professional organizations that serve the technology professions. The first in this series on The National Association of Industrial and Technical Teacher Educators (NAITTE) by S. D. Johnson, R. N. Evans, and J. Stern appeared in the journal Volume XXII, Number 2, Summer/Fall 1996. This was followed by a special section on the MVITEC in Volume XXIII, Number 1, Winter/Spring 1997, and Wright's article on the CTTE in Volume XXIII, Number 2, Summer/Fall 1997.

Future issues will carry more such articles to provide members of the technology professions a comprehensive portrait of professional organizations that exist throughout the world. Some serve students, others industrial and business practitioners, and others are devoted to teachers on various educational levels.

The progress and strength of the professions in technology rely on the dynamics of viable professional organizations. We believe it is in the readers' interests to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy the professional benefits of one or more of these organizations as appropriate to the individual's status and needs within a technology profession. JS

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A major challenge facing education in the years ahead will be creating technologically literate citizens capable of making decisions and functioning effectively in a fast-moving, highly sophisticated society. The International Technology Education Association (ITEA) plans to address this challenge by helping all teachers in applying technology in the solution of major problems facing society. ITEA plans to move society forward, advance the goals of education, and act as a catalyst for change while serving as a mechanism that allows people to further their ideas. ITEA represents the heart of leadership of teaching about technology in our schools. The association performs many leadership roles including, but not limited to, serving as a clearinghouse for information, a facilitator for change, and a perpetuator of ideas that professionals want enacted.

PURPOSE AND LEADERSHIP

Purpose

The organization was originally established in 1939 as the American Industrial Arts Association. Its creation came from a group of Epsilon Pi Tau members who were interested in furthering educational ideas that were then being taught in industrial arts classes. William E. Warner was the catalyst for creating the association. He had a desire to promote the field within the broader field of education, to advance quality teaching, and to create a forum to share ideas and advance practices. Warner's idea for the organization has evolved for 60 years through the organized efforts of individuals working toward common goals (see Figure 1). The governance structure has been altered many times to respond to changes in the field and society. The names of the association's journals (*The Industrial Arts Teacher*, *Man/Society/Technology*, and *The Technology Teacher*) and the names of the association itself have been likewise adjusted. These changes have been fruitful.

Governance

ITEA is led by a board of directors that sets policy and direction through its strategic plan and program of work (see Figure 2). The board positions include representation from classroom teachers, supervisors/administrators, and teacher educators. Each of these positions is a part of the executive committee, which also includes the executive director, a nonvoting member of the board. The councils of the association hold board positions that represent elementary school teachers, college students, teacher educators, and supervisors. Members are served via a regional organization including three regions in North America and Region 4 covering international membership. Periodically, this organizational device is analyzed to review how the members are represented. Adjustments are made when deemed appropriate.

The annual meeting of ITEA's House of Delegates offers additional opportunities for information sharing and decision making. It allows the association's affiliates to influence directions of the organization through a resolution process. ITEA has affiliate associations in each state/province in North America and in other countries such as Australia. Resolutions have been developed that advocated name changes, the building of new relationships, and various forms of professional development.

Support Groups

Numerous committees, task forces, and review boards are a part of the association's operation. They allow the membership to play a key role in shaping the work to be accomplished (see Figure 3). Standing committees assist with the election process, resolutions development, publications creation, membership services, and more. Task forces are created as needed to address specific tasks and are dismissed when the work is completed.

The headquarters staff works in a supportive role for all governance work. Various staff members work as liaisons to the board, com-

Article II Purposes

Section 1. ITEA exists to provide leadership in the design and development of quality instruction, research, and service in technology education.

Section 2. ITEA exists to support excellence in marketing and assistance in the international integration, implementation, and acceptance of technology education.

Figure 1. ITEA bylaws.

mittees, or other groups, or to individuals who are completing the work of the association. Such work is used to create support for conferences, professional development, membership activities, publications production, commercial trade show exhibitions, marketing/advertising, public relations, Internet work, and the finances of the association.

In response to the vision of its leaders, a major advisory council has evolved over the years and is known as the Technology Education Advisory Council (TEAC). TEAC facilitates input to ITEA leaders. Over the years this has included outstanding individuals outside of the profession; the Foundation for Technology Education (FTE), which now provides numerous scholarships, grants, and professional development to strengthen the long-range future

of the profession; and the Center for Advancing the Teaching of Technology and Science (CATTS), which will play a key role in the future of professional development for the association and profession.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND CHALLENGES

Strategic directions addressed by ITEA will result from an ongoing series of plans designed to improve teacher quality, better position the field within the total education community, promote technology teaching as a rewarding career choice, and continue improvements in program and professional development.

Teacher Quality

Teacher quality continues to be the major

ITEA Credo

The International Technology Education Association is concerned about improving the quality of life through constant improvement of teaching and dissemination of information about our technological world. Forums and an atmosphere that inspires people to dream of great things should be provided that will lead to helping students achieve success. The association has a responsibility to its contributors to recognize their dignity as human beings and to assure that they share in the success which their work and contributions made possible.

Figure 2. Board of Director's responsibilities of coordination, communication, and monitoring.

<u>Committees</u>	<u>Review Boards</u>	<u>Task Forces</u>
Affiliation	The Technology Teacher	Developed to create or support selected initiatives, then disbanded when project is completed.
Ballot Counting	Technology and Children	
Conference Program	Journal of Technology Education	
Membership	Distinguished Technology Educator	
Awards		
Special Events		
Elections		
Government Relations		
Resolution		

Figure 3. Support groups of ITEA.

focus of ITEA's work. Countless dollars and energy are spent in advancing work to provide a consistent forward-thinking philosophy and direction for the technology teacher. ITEA is constantly interacting with government agencies such as the National Science Foundation, National Academy of Engineers, National Academy of Science, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the National Research Council to promote and advocate strategies to enhance technology teaching.

A consistent program is conducted to provide information and direction to accrediting agencies such as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to strengthen professional development in the preparation of teachers. ITEA works with its council, the Council of Technology Teacher Education, and NCATE to deliver the highest level of teacher preparation. Work has also been conducted with the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) to correctly position technology education within the education community. Currently, NBPTS has categorized technology education only within the vocational community, omitting the general education aspects of the subject and the fact that most technology teachers are not vocationally certified.

Research projects are conducted to create and enhance a rationale and structure for the study of technology and standards for technology education. ITEA's journals, *The Technology Teacher*, *Technology and Children*, and the *Journal of Technology Education*, along with numerous other media serve as guides, perpetuate thought, and provide motivation to teachers, helping to adjust their philosophy and approach to technology teaching.

Positioning

The advent of *Technology for All Americans: Rationale and Structure for the Study of Technology*, followed by the *Standards for Technology Education*, is expected to result in a repositioning of technological studies in our schools. What was once an industrial subject directed toward vocational careers has become a technological subject positioned in the curriculum with an identified content base. The content position relates naturally to mathematics, science, and engineering. In this way technology is the grand integrator of these subjects as well as the catalyst to advance our human capabilities of invention and innovation. ITEA will continue to work with affiliate associations, government agencies, school systems, and any other groups that can assist in establishing technological studies as a core subject. The field is going through a maturing

process as a content subject. The process was begun by ITEA professionals and will continue to be advanced and its position strengthened in our schools.

Recruitment

One of the biggest challenges being addressed by the association and the members of this field at this time is the promotion of technology education as a rewarding career choice. If not successfully addressed, we could witness the demise of technology teaching. Shortages are now being created by a large number of retirements and lack of students in the pipeline to become teachers. Professionals at all levels in the field need to do their part to recruit teachers. This challenge to overcome this shortage will remain a major focus of the association until the severity of the crisis is lessened. But an adequate supply of competent teachers will always be of concern to the profession.

ITEA maintains a continuing campaign to publicize the teacher shortage within the field of education. Contacts have been established with government and education agencies, major newspapers, and educational publications. This shortage is a challenge for every level of technology education and will affect the quality of teaching in our field.

Professional Development

The content of technology education continually changes. This will continue to happen as long as people are researching and inventing and as long as the field is about "human innovation in action!" Therefore, ITEA must constantly be creating professional development and curriculum materials to help teachers better reflect contemporary happenings in our world. Plans are now underway to provide curriculum materials that reflect the standards and to provide in-service to teachers about such new areas of the field as microgravity, biotechnology, and chemical technology. ITEA will continue to provide one of the largest trade shows and conferences on technology education while creating other smaller gatherings to assist teachers in selected localities.

One of the major ways that ITEA plans to deliver these types of professional developments is through its Center to Advance the Teaching of Technology and Science (CATTS). CATTS will provide selected programs for school systems, affiliated association meetings, and other venues. CATTS will also create a consortium to complete curriculum work for its members. The consortium will fill a void by providing curricular direction to its members and allowing states to join together in provid-

ing materials to its members. Other work completed by CATTS will be in research aimed at helping teachers by providing useful materials.

These strategic directions hold much promise for the profession. Their success will contribute toward maintaining and gaining in strength as a strong subject within the field of education. With success of this kind technology education will also be recognized as a strong contributor to our society.

THE FUTURE

The perspectives, working structure, and leadership of ITEA will have to change significantly if the association is to remain a leader in the future. The electronic world has changed the way that associations operate and function. The field of technology is now dealing with new tools, standards, and perspectives. Knowledge sharing is in while information hoarding is out. ITEA must address the fact that information technology is part of our profession and has become a dependable source of insight, provides synthesis, advances effective practices, and is indispensable to the daily success of its members.

The business part of the association must respond to a new generation of knowledge, customized requests, a need for cohesiveness, responsiveness, and convenience at a cost people will pay. ITEA must take a look at itself. Instead of chasing "all of the information in the world," ITEA should be looking at "less is more." Directions must be taken that will be sustained and that will provide a competitive advantage. ITEA will be the key to the future of the technology education profession by providing needed leadership and stewardship for success. Some elements of leadership activities in the future include:

1. Going beyond the current core members to those on the fringes.
2. Providing information on products, services, and activities to the membership even before they may realize their importance.
3. Strategizing how the completed rationale and structure, the standards, and the new assessment materials will serve as a basis for the profession as it adjusts the curricu-

4. Leading and assisting members to be prepared for the effects of combining the foregoing with digitized information and interactive instruction using devices such as the Internet that will change the nature of technology education. Members must be able to move the field that was built upon heavy "hands-on" instruction toward virtual experiences to automate activities in a different type of "hands/minds-on" experience.

5. Continuing to position technology education within the education community because all of the foregoing characteristics affect education. The changing nature of technology, society, and work will cause a need for technology education more than ever before. To fail to recognize and react to that need will plague progress and the capability of countries to fully utilize the technological capabilities of their people. In short, the very tradition of not having technological courses in the past will serve as reasoning for not including them in the future. In a world loaded with technological opportunities and a need for understanding, it seems a shame that countries will not be able to take full advantage of their futures because of traditional thinking. Einstein once noted that "our future will not change until our way of thinking changes!" The biggest challenge facing ITEA and technology education will be the limits placed on the field by the traditional thinking of others. Challenges such as these can be overcome through hard work, strategies accompanied by high goals, and a passion to give people the type of education that will assist them in progressing.

As ITEA continues to gain strength through the work of its members, the technology education teaching profession becomes stronger in advancing education around the world. ITEA is a powerful voice in technology education, and its members have contributed to the progress of education in a fast-advancing technological world.

An ITEA Selected List for Further Reading

- International Technology Education Association. (1996). *Technology for All Americans: A Rationale and Structure for the Study of Technology*. Reston, VA: Author.
- International Technology Education Association. (in press). *Standards for Technology Education*. Reston, VA: Author.
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