Sabbatical Report: Vivienne Butcher, Principal Lincoln Primary School, Christchurch.

Term 3 2013.

Introduction

This sabbatical was undertaken during 2012, and in term 3, 2013. I completed the Certificate of Effective Practice in Gifted Education distance programme, delivered by Responding to Exceptionally Able Children (REACH) Educational Consultancy, in 2012. This was a very practical and beneficial programme, which gave insight into gifted and talented children, and programmes which will support them within our schools. I visited California during my 10 week sabbatical period in 2013, to interview several schools in relation to their Gifted and Talented programmes. This enabled me to compare practise, and investigate resources and programmes which may be of use in New Zealand schools. The International Conference which was to be held in Auckland in June 2013 was unfortunately cancelled.

I have based my research on school visits, both in New Zealand and California and extensive readings associated with study in 2012, and New Zealand practise.

Acknowledgements

I would like to that the Lincoln Primary School Board of Trustees for their support. I am very grateful to the staff for continuing to show total commitment to Tracey Riley and Cade Englefield, who were Acting Principals during my absence. I am grateful to Teach New Zealand for making this sabbatical possible. I am indebted to my colleagues and personnel who gave up their valuable time to discuss their programmes with me.

Executive Summary

Whilst it is a requirement of all state schools to meet the needs of “Priority Learners” which includes gifted and talented students, it is often very difficult to find the time and resources to meet their needs in authentic and appropriate ways. As Lincoln Primary School has a significant number of students who are very able in a range of contexts, it is important that a well informed, cohesive plan is developed to ensure this group of students are positively engaged in meaningful learning, which is challenging, rewarding and motivational.

Purpose

- Develop a set of identification tools and criteria for selection of our gifted and talented students to participate in programmes which will enrich their learning and extend their thinking
- Develop systems which will enable us to share information relating to students across the three state sectors, being pre-school, primary

school and secondary schools. As we have the three sectors working from what is essentially one site, we already have close connections, this work aims to extend that shared understanding
- Present this report to Lincoln Primary School staff, and other sector groups

Rationale and Background Information

Within the The National Administration Guidelines, NAG 1(c) iii, states that: on the basis of good quality assessment information, identify students and groups of students :
(iii) who have special needs , including gifted and talented students, and
(iv) aspects of the curriculum which require particular attention.
It is therefore a legal requirement that children within these groups, have programmes of work developed which challenge and support to reach their potential.

The Ministry of Educations book entitled Nurturing Gifted and Talented Children, is available from Learning Media in Wellington. It states that while opinions vary on what constitutes "giftedness" most people agree on the following three points:

- Being gifted means being exceptional in one or more areas compared to other people of a similar age.
- Giftedness is inherited (nature) but is also developed by external influences (nurture).
- Giftedness can be found among people from all cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic groups and among people who have physical, sensory, and learning disabilities.

Whilst undertaking a study programme offered by the REACH (Responding to Exceptionally Able Children) Educational Consultancy, I was introduced to the compulsory text "They're Not Bringing My Brain Out", written by Rosemary Cathcart. This is a "must have" text for schools who wish to become more informed about the needs of gifted children in New Zealand schools.
When trying to define "Gifted and Talented" I have found three sets of characteristics, which helped when identifying children.
Rosemary Cathcart (3rd Edition) They're Not Bringing My Brain Out – states that many attempts have been made to define the term Gifted and Talented. One of the best known is that produced by a committee led by Sidney Marland, US Commissioner of Education, in 1972 Congress report. In this report, "gifted and talented children" are described as those who "by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance….. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any one of the following areas, singly or in combination:

- General intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership qualities
- The visual and performing arts

- Psychomotor ability

Characteristics exhibited by gifted children include:

- Verbal fluency
- An acute sensitivity and empathy for others
- Heightened perceptual skills
- A dislike of routine
- Introversion (often)
- An imaginative, fantasy-creating mind
- A broad and changing spectrum of interests
- A preference for complex ideas and/or tasks that provide challenge
- An unusual ability to see relationships
- A curious, investigative mind, full of questions
- A strong interest in problem solving
- An openness to new ideas and experiences
- A tendency toward individualism
- A strong need to be self-directed, independent

Whilst these definitions and characteristics support us to indentify these children, it becomes the challenge of the school to develop programmes of work, delivered by teachers who understand these children, and have a strong desire to accommodate their individual needs, and learning styles. Children's gifts and talents extend across every strand of the curriculum, therefore the challenge to meet them is very significant
If we separate these into Giftedness and Talents, we further extend the challenge of meeting children's needs.

Sidis Archives Homepage ,The Mailbox News, notes that:

Giftedness = top 10% of students. Areas of giftedness include
NATURAL ABILITY DOMAINS

- **Intellectual:** fluid reasoning, verbal, special, memory, sense of observation, judgement, meta-cognition
- **Creative:** Inventiveness (problem-solving), imagination, originality (arts) retrieval fluency
- **Socio-affective:** Intelligence (perceptiveness) Communication (empathy, tact) Influence (leadership, persuasion)
- **Sensori-motor (S/M):** S=visual, auditory. M= strength, endurance, reflexes etc.

Talents = top 10% of students. Areas of talents include:
SYSTEMATICALLY DEVELOPED SKILLS (SYSDEV)

- **Academics:** language, science humanities etc.
- **Arts:** visual, drama, music etc.
- **Business:** sales, entrepreneurship, management etc.
- **Leisure:** chess video games, puzzles etc.
- **Social action:** media public office etc
- **Sports:** individual or team
- **Technology:** trades and crafts, electronics, computers, etc

Children may present with one or many combinations of the gifts and talents as listed above. Schools need to be equipped with identification tools, systems to develop and implement programmes which will engage students, whilst enhancing their opportunities. Resources to support implementation need to be identified to ensure appropriate programmes can be delivered. These are challenges, which should be viewed as opportunities for the students, teachers, families and the future of our communities.

Ministry of Education (2008) Nurturing Gifted and Talented Children, includes a list of characteristics of Giftedness. They are:

1. Reasons well (good thinker)
2. Learns rapidly
3. Has an extensive vocabulary
4. Has an excellent memory
5. Has a long attention span (if interested)
6. Is sensitive (feels hurt easily)
7. Shows compassion
8. Is a perfectionist
9. Is intense
10. Is morally sensitive
11. Is strongly curious
12. Perseveres (When interested)
13. Has a high degree of energy
14. Prefers older companions
15. Has a wide range of interests
16. Has a great sense of humour
17. Is an early or avid reader (if too young to read, loves being read to)
18. Is concerned with justice/fairness
19. Has keen powers of observation
20. At times, demonstrates a judgement that is mature for age
21. Is highly creative
22. Tends to question authority
23. Has facility with numbers
24. Is skilled with jigsaw puzzles

The combination of the three identification tools give us guidelines within which we can create an understanding of how these children will present within the school setting. Teacher observation, coupled with parental input will assist with creating a Gifted and Talented register for use within the school programme.

Methodology

Information gathered as part of my study during 2012, will be presented and shared to support schools when addressing NAG 1,c,(iii). Comparisons between Californian schools identification, and programme development and delivery will be used to give comparative practices. Practices between schools in New Zealand will be shared which will enable others to utilise and adopt systems which may be of use within their school setting.

Findings

An objective of my study was to compare practice relating to identification and meeting the needs of gifted and talented students in New Zealand, to that in California. During a trip to California, I visited several schools, and interviewed the Principals, or District Managers. Information related to these visits is compared to practice in schools in Greater Christchurch.

Background Information.
California is split into Education Districts geographically. These districts could be compared with the historical Education Boards in New Zealand prior to 1989. Each District has its own Governing body. These Districts, undertake the day to day management of the schools for which they are responsible. Employment is managed at District level whilst each individual school has input into the programmes which are developed collaboratively with the District personnel. I did find that some schools in other districts, which are in lower socio economic regions, and whose student achievement outcomes are below that expected, do not have gifted and talented programmes operating. These schools are focusing on raising overall student achievement, before embarking on additional extension programmes.

I was fortunate to be able to interview Sharon Uyeno - administrator of Programming and Lisa Hansen Programming Director of the Clovis District. Sharon's background includes 30 years experience, initially as a speech therapist, then moving into the role of Deputy Principal and Principalship. Sharon has been working with all levels of schooling, this includes 15 years with elementary students. Lisa has worked within the Special Education field for 15 years. This is her first year co-ordinating the GATE programmes for the Clovis District.
Clovis would align to an area which in New Zealand would be classified as high decile. It is a very popular area, renowned for high educational standards, and achievement which is above that of the Californian average. People purchase property

The following dialogue gives the Cloivs District response to questions in red, with the New Zealand comparison in italics.

How many schools within this district?

Clovis District includes 33 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 1 continuation school(enrolling children who display academic or behavioural challenges),and 5 high schools.

In New Zealand, each school is managed independantly of each other. Governance decisions are made at Board level, whilst Management decisions are made by the Principal. Each school makes the decision regarding levels of funding, and staffing which will be allocated to Gifted and Talented programmes. This decision should relate direcely to individual chidlren's needs, whilst taking into account the school wide achievement data. Our National Standards information relates to chidlren who are working "Above

National Standard". Children included within a gifted and talented programme would generally be working "Well Above" in one or more academic area, however our visual spatially gifted students may not appear within this accelerated group of students. The National Achievement Guidelines do state that the needs of these children must be identified and met. Our challenge is how to do this within the restrictions of the resources available.
It could be an outcome of the Clusters of schools recently developed in Greater Christchurch, will enable groups of schools to identify this as a need within their area. This could begin to align with the Californian model.

How are programmes resourced?

Historically, there had been specific funding available for GATE programmes. This funding source disappeared about 4 years ago. Since then it has become an area where a School District has to decide whether it is a priority budget area. Clovis School District is known and respected within California, as being a District which values the outcomes of GATE programmes. They, therefore have key personnel who manage the identification of students, co- ordinate programmes, and support schools with the management and delivery of such programmes.

There has never been specific funding available specifically for gifted and talented programmes in New Zealand. Although the NAG states that these children must be identified, and their needs met, it is a significant challenge for schools to do this. The level of expertise within each school varies significantly, the knowledge and skills to identify these children, develop and resource programmes, and monitor outcomes varies considerably. The concept of clustering schools could address this to some degree.

What Management mechanisms do you have in place?

Specific student achievement targets are developed at each individual site. Site plans are housed and monitored by the District Office. Achieving or surpassing these targets is an essential step within the accountability process. Successful outcomes attract a higher level of funding, therefore are very important. Student achievement information is reported publically, therefore successful programme outcomes are what will ensure the continuation of the investment.

As each school in New Zealand is managed independantly, we have to develop our own individual management mechanisms. This can be a significant barrier to the implementation of programmes.

Do all schools participate in the GATE programme.

All schools are able to identify children for the programme. A unified assessment tool is used to ensure consistency in data which is being considered. Where a school has a proven record of high academic achievement, the number of children being able to access the programme may be limited to ensure representation is available to all schools within the district. Participation is not mandatory; schools do not have to participate.

The closest parallel we have is MoE Group Special Education service, or Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour. In the past, I have not been able to access the Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour to support gifted students. Their focus historically has been children who are unable to access programmes due to lack of skills, or behavioural issues. I have been unable to find schools which have successfully accessed support from the Ministry of Education Special Education Services for support with gifted and talented students. (Autistic Savant students may be the exception.)

How are children identified?

Children are formally assessed in grade 2 (year 3 NZ). The Otis Lennon assessment tool is used for identification purposes at this stage. Additional assessment can be completed during years 4, 5 or 6 if the teacher or parent feel a child may qualify, or if a new child enters the school system within the Clovis School District. Data from this assessment is used as one criteria for consideration. Entry to the programme is in year 4. Children can be identified by their teachers for consideration, at any stage of their schooling. When this is the case, an alternative assessment tool is used. Parents can request that their child is assessed for inclusion in the GATE programme.

Generally children are identified by their teachers in the New Zealand School setting. Schools who shared information relating their programmes, have not used formalised assessment tools, or if they have, the outcomes of these assessments have been combined with other information such as Overall Teacher Judgment (triangulation of several pieces of information, including teacher observation). The Otis Lennon assessment must be administered by a psychologist. Some parents choose to have this undertaken independently of the school, financing it themselves. It should be noted that than teachers are research shows that parents are more accurate when identifying gifted and talented children.

How old are children who participate in your programme?

Children from year 4 to year 6 are included in the GATE programme. Children in year 3 can be identified as exceptional capable learners. Their needs are met within a differentiated classroom programme. Children in years 7 and 8 work within a Leadership, or Honours programme. Composite classes are used at times where the proficient students are grouped with the advanced students within a lower year group. This provides extension challenges for the younger students.

Within New Zealand, we use composite classes, and collaborative teachings, which has many parallels to the Clovis model. We use ability groupings within classes, with the majority of teachers catering to individual children's needs when necessary. We certainly identify academically gifted children before

year 3, and have extension programmes in place for them. One of the challenges is to identify gifted under achieving children at this early stage.
The leadership and Honours programme referred to aligns with our leadership models used in New Zealand schools. There is a variety of models in operation, across schools, however it is a way of extending students who have talents in leadership areas.

Who participates in the development of the programmes?

Each school site has a representative, who works with the programme coordinator to develop a programme which will meet their students needs. Parents are consulted in relation to topics or focus areas. Some of the concepts developed within the programmes have included project based learning, collaborative team based learning and topic based learning, e.g. Paper.

We do not have a programme co-coordinator, however I found that the approach used for gifted children aligns with our Inquiry Learning model. What we see a standard practice is viewed as an extension activity. This may be due to the more regulated programmes delivered in the mainstream within schools in California.
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When you refer to differentiated classroom programmes, is this vertical acceleration, or broadening the scope of study, but at a similar level of difficulty?

Differential learning refers to the variations of difficulty of tasks with direct correlation to the students abilities and expectations. Children who are challenged learners have a programme which will challenge them but also provide activities which will allow them to achieve success. Differentiated programmes are the tool used to address the various stages of learning within the year seven and eight year groups. An example given during our interview included reading an approved novel, then reviewing the book.

Differentiated learning is standard practice within New Zealand schools. We use ability groupings as standard practice in mathematics, writing and reading. Many schools are now ensuring that children do not progress through the levels of reading material simply because they can read the text. Standard practice is for these children to be engaged in a range of activities to broaden their knowledge and understanding, consolidating skills at a level which still provides challenge, but may not be further up the reading scale.

Do children ever work in a class which is a grade higher for a specific strength area?

No, accelerated students needs are catered for within the differentiated

programme. In some cases composite classes are used, as referred to earlier in this interview.

Some schools have decided that it is in the best interests of the individual pupil to work on specific learning challenges with classes above their Ministry of Education year level. This practice is not used extensively but is effective when appropriate needs have been identified.

How do you use technologies to extend students?

New technologies are being introduced into classroom programmes as their uses are identified. GATE programmes utilise technologies when it is appropriate.

Digital technologies are being used more frequently within the classroom setting as an extension tool. It is important that the child has the skills to use the tools effectively, and that systems are in place to ensure each child's safety whilst accessing web based content. Virtual Schools have been used by many schools as an extension activity with very positive results. Many schools are now at a point of introducing Bring Your Own Device programmes. This will support differentiated programmes, for gifted and talented students. Their ability to make contact, or access resources in their areas of strength will be significantly enhanced.

Do you focus on literacy/ numeracy, or do you cover the arts, sciences etc?

As programmes are run either before school, during the lunch break, or after school, and schools within the district participate in programme development, following parent consultation, programmes vary in curriculum content. Some study topics mentioned during our interview included robotics, Destination Imagintation and science fair projects.

All schools contacted run their programmes during the school day. They also include a variety of content depending on the children's needs. Robotics is being introduced into some technology programmes (year 7 and 8 at a technology sites specifically funded by the Ministry of Education) Virtual School programmes delivered by private providers have also been used to add a new dimension to children's learning. These programmes are generally delivered during the school day, with identified children participating. They also require a significant commitment of hours at home. This enables parents to work alongside their children, which is beneficial for all concerned.

How long do children spend during each week working on specific programmes, does this replace, or enhance the general classroom programme?

As the programme is conducted out of school contact time, the duration is at the discretion of the individual school.

Of the schools contacted, most have progrmmes which run for 1-1.5 hours duration, once weekly. Schools tend to vary the topic being covered, to ensure a range of children's needs and abilities can be supported.

Can parents nominate children independently of their base school?

Yes they can request that an assessment be carried out. Results will be analysed, then all considerations relating to their inclusion will be discussed, including the number of children already included in the programme from their school.

Parents need to approach the school where their child is enrolled to discuss the possibility of giftedness. Many parents are reluctant to do this. The results of a staff survey undertaken was very interesting. Teachers were asked if they felt teachers, parents or a combination of both were more accurate when identifying children who were gifted and or talented. It is a very simple exercise, with one question, and three options as answers. The question is:
Who is best equipped to identify gifted and talented children?

1. *the parent*
2. *the teacher*
3. *a combination of both*

Research undertaken has shown that parents are more accurate when identifying whether their child is gifted, talented or both. Very few teachers, only four out of twenty three sampled, felt that parents were more accurate. felt a combination of both, while 9 felt teachers were more accurate, while the remaining ten felt a combination of both. It was a surprise to some teachers. It also challenges the concept of pushy parents, and the pupil who constantly says he/she is bored! It needs to become standard practice when approached by parents, to run the checklists through in relation to the child in question. Some surprising results may be found. It will also show parents that you are taking their inquiry seriously.
There is a perception that higher decile schools meet the needs of gifted and talented children more effectively than lower decile schools. One decile 2 school had an exceptional programme in place. They had attempted to develop a cluster within their area, but found that surrounding schools did not see this as a priority. Increased use of digital technologies may address the issue of travel, and enable like minded children to work collaboratively in the near future.

Do children's teachers participate in any professional development, or get information about what their children are studying on the programme?

The programme co-ordination works with the teachers to develop content.

This is an area which could be developed within the cluster model. Some schools already have very good programmes in place. As part of a cluster initiative, this strength could be utilised more fully by groups of schools. Providing professional development at individual school level may not be the best use of our limited resources.

Do children travel to a base school, or are groups working in their own schools, is the teacher itinerant, or are children travelling to the programme?

As each school runs independant programmes, children are not required to travel. Teachers based at each school are responsible for programme delivery.

The cluster model is an ideal way to strengthen practice, and utilise skills which already exist. It is financially more cost effective to move teachers rather than children. With the use of digital technologies, we have an amazing opportunity to co-ordinate expertise, and develop programmes which will be delivered to groups of like minded children, anywhere in New Zealand.

Conclusion.

It was very interesting to see when the similarities and differences were. The coordinated approach, where a significant number of schools were centrally resourced, ensure that all schools within that District, had access to knowledgeable personnel, who supported each individual school to develop programmes of work to meet the needs of children enrolled at their school. Colleagues could work together, engage in professional dialogue, and access professional development with others. They were supported to do this. As each school in New Zealand stands alone, it is difficult to make these professional connections. We do not have psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists etc. available to each school to undertake assessments and deliver programmes to children at no cost to schools or families. The Ministry of Education Clustering of Schools may support this initiative, if schools see it as a priority area of development, however all costs would fall to the individual schools, which would be a definite barrier.

Identification of children for inclusion in programmes in California relies heavily on formal testing. When I discussed using Teacher Judgment, both Sharon and Lisa felt that their teachers would be very vulnerable from parents who would question the inclusion of children on grounds other than formal assessment results. The level of trust which is a strength within our system, is not evident within the Californian system.
New Zealand schools have flexibility in developing a curriculum which is reflective of their school and communities needs and priorities. This is a significant strength of our system. What we see as "Business as Usual" with regard to Inquiry Learning, Science Fairs etc, are seen as extension activities. The introduction of BYOD will add another dimension to children's learning.

GIFTED AND TALENTED UNDER ACHIEVERS

This is a challenging area, and one which is of great interest. Every one of these children are individuals, with very different needs and strengths. Our current system where teachers are becoming more confident when making professional judgments relating to children's learning, we enter an era where this skill can be utilised to identify the gifted and talented under achiever. These children can present in various ways. One such child had received a significant level of learning support, from reading recovery, through to written language and numeracy interventions. Verbally the picture did not match. He could have an in-depth conversation with you relating to insects, birds and general biological themes. During a filed trip to a university looking at Bugs and Mud, he was totally engaged, sharing his knowledge and understanding, whilst actively seeking new information. He was fascinating to observe. Whilst on another field trip, a school camp, whilst working on team building problem solving, while being quite passive, he did give suggestions about possible solutions. The louder, more assertive children were quite aggressive in their approach. Pupil B. continued to quietly make his suggestions. Eventually, when the team had exhausted their suggestions, Pupil B again verbalised his solution. The group tried this strategy, to find that it did work. This scenario was repeated many times, until Pupil B became the quiet leader, sharing his ideas with the group. I had recently read the article written by Lesley K. Sword (2000) entitled I think in Pictures, You Teach in Words. This reading was included in the REACH study modules, and has been invaluable when working with teachers. Developing an understanding of different learning styles has been significant when identifying under achieving gifted students. Pupil B now understands himself and his learning preference. He ensures any new teachers are aware of the environment he needs to be successful within our school. The reading was used as part of a staff meeting, which ensured all teachers were exposed to this concept, and understood the impact of programme delivery on certain students. It was wonderful to see this years student achievement information. Pupil B is now working Above National standards, which is certainly where he belongs.
A rating scale accessed at www.gifteddevelopment.com and www.visualspacial.org are useful tools for identification of visual spatial students, who find it difficult to function in a world of words. Teachers need to understand that one style of delivery does not fit all children, in fact the reverse was the case with Pupil B.

Following is a list of some resources which will be helpful when focusing on identification and understanding the needs of the Gifted Under Achieving student.

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Ensuring Information is well managed relating to support programmes

Strategies to support transfer of Information across sector groups

Implications

It is a legal requirement that Gifted and Talented students, are identified, and have programmes of work in place which will meet their needs. Our challenge is to utilise the identification tools available to us, and develop programmes which will not just meet their needs, but extend these very able pupils in a range of ways. This is a diverse group, who may seem to have very little in common. Collaborating with other schools is sound practice, as there will be children in other schools who do have similar characteristics and needs. Research has proven that gifted, like minded children enjoy working together. One of our challenges is to find other schools and pupils who wish to engage in a collaborative programme.

Within a medium sized school of 400 students, there are likely to be between 20 – 40 students who can be identified as gifted and talented. Once identified, it is now our task to identify resources to develop a programme which will engage them in learning which is meaningful and interesting. Rosemary Cathcarts book “they’re Not Bringing My Brain Out” includes essential reading

when developing a programme of work for our Gifted and Talented students. The planning stage following identification of students, includes a very strong focus on skill development of children. In order to actively engage in meaningful learning, children must posses an essential set of skills. This text includes 2 key concepts.
Key Concept 1: Generating a high level of interest in learning. Rosemary lists four purposes for why this is an essential part of her programme. She follows with six ways of generating interest in learning.
Key Concept 2: Developing the tools of thought: overview.
Essential tools of thought listed in They're Not Bringing My Brain Out, include:

1. Study and Research Skills
    - Strategy A: Learning how to plan and carry out a research task
    - Strategy B: Learning how to set study questions
    - Strategy C: Learning how to make and record investigations
    - Strategy D: Being a researcher.

Rosemary summarise this section of her book by stating:
Both to help them in their present situation and to prepare them for later and more advanced study, gifted children need to become highly competent and independent learners, capable of a high degree of initiative, self discipline and resourcefulness. For this to happen they need to:

- *Know how learning works;*
- *Be able to frame relevant and significant questions;*
- *Have the skills required to access information through both reference and original research, and to evaluate what they find;*
- *Feel confident that their own thinking and ideas have value too, and to be able to self-evaluate;*
- *Be prepared to make mistakes*

2. Observation Skills

Rosemary believes that observational skills are not learned skills, in the sense of research skills. They are intrinsic skills, present at birth in all human beings. Our job is to see that they are not lost, or diminished, but kept alive and nurtured so that the child's awareness and freshness of vision remain in the mature adult. To achieve this, she states that we need to help children to:

- Maintain their awareness of sensory input;
- Develop skill in recording and interpreting such input;
- Build the use of this skill into their learning processes.

3. Communication Skills

Effective communication skills is imperative. These skills enables gifted and talented students to share their discoveries in a range of genres. Children need to be able to communicate in a variety of ways, they also need to develop receptive tools to understand how others are communicating with them. Rosemary lists the key essential factors necessary for children to develop effective communication skills as :

- making use of discussion and the opportunities it provides to develop skill in understanding and communicating with others;

- ensuring gifted children have a good understanding of language structure and opportunities to practise its use in a wide variety of situations;
- nurturing and encourage the development of an extensive vocabulary and an awareness of the precision of meaning that the nuances of language can provide;
- assisting gifted children to develop an awareness and sensitive understanding of languages without words and the emotions and relationships these can convey.

4. Thinking Skills

Thinking skills involve far more than just problem-solving. They include all those dimensions of thinking that relate to opinions, values, innovation and vision.
To nurture these skills in gifted children, we must fist create the right kind of environment, one in which intellectual and imaginative exploration is supported and encouraged. Practical strategies include the use of:

- Mulit-solution puzzles;
- Strategic board games'
- Mazes;
- Logic puzzles;
- Unconventional comprehension;
- Future Problem Solving.

5. Organisational skills

Gifted children often seem to find it difficult to organise themselves. Their thoughts tend to be complex, and not aligned with the philosophies of conventional school systems. Time management can pose difficulties in areas such as having a clear understanding of how long a particular task will take, and realising that there may be several tasks to complete within a set time frame. Gifted children may wish to allocate a significant amount of time to a task, when the teacher has estimated this to be a small task. The gifted child will not want to abandon the set task in order to complete a less meaningful task. Lack of self management skill can be a label given to these children, when the reality is that they want to use more time to go into greater depth with a set task. Personal organisation, ensuring that all the required tools are available before commencing a task can be another area of difficulty. Actually commencing a task can take longer than other students. Methodically planning a task is often not seen as important. Gifted children may commence a task without a clear plan, and not complete all components of the activity due to being distracted by new discoveries along the way, or finding the task lacks stimulation of motivation to complete.
Strategies to address these issues are covered in "They're Not Bringing My Brain Out". It is vital that we teach these skills in order to equip our gifted students with the tools for success. The younger they are introduced into the programme, the better off our students will be. If children are unable to

develop these skills effectively, even though they have been taught and reinforced, it may be necessary to seek support to resolve them.
Additional information is included in this book which includes:

- Developing intellectual and creative potential:
    1. Ways of Knowing
    2. Exercises to challenge the child's current knowledge and level of thinking
    3. drawing on the arts
    4. Encouraging original work
    5. Making independent study meaningful
    6. Guiding the gifted reader

- Fostering emotional, social and ethical growth:
    1. Introduction
    2. Self-knowledge, self-acceptance and self-esteem
    3. Growth towards emotional and social maturity
    4. Ethical growth

This book is an essential professional resource for all New Zealand School gifted and talented programme. Rosemary Cathcart was awarded the Queens Service Medal in 2004 for her work in the field of Gifted and Talented Education in New Zealand. She was the founding director of the George Parkyn National Centre for Gifted and Talented Education.

The REACH programme provides professional development opportunity which will support any schools GATE co-ordinator to fully understand the needs of our gifted and talented students, and develop meaningful, engaging programmes not just for the academically able students, but also for those who are under achieving within our school systems.

Bennefits

As educators within the New Zealand schooling system, we have many tools which will identify our academically able students. We are more challenged when it comes to identifying and supporting our gifted and talented under achieving students. Developing an awareness of their characteristics, and working in partnership with their whanau, we can make a significant difference to the learning opportunities which they are able to access. Using a variety of delivery techniques, and supporting differing learning styles, has the capacity to have a life long impact on them as valuable members of our learning community.

Conclusions

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