

Gifted and Talented Education Policy

Written: Term 3 2016

Review Due: Term 3 2019

OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes for gifted and talented students are improved.

Programs based on identified needs are delivered within available school resources.

High expectations and raising the bar for all students, including identified Gifted and Talented students will result in improved outcomes for all.

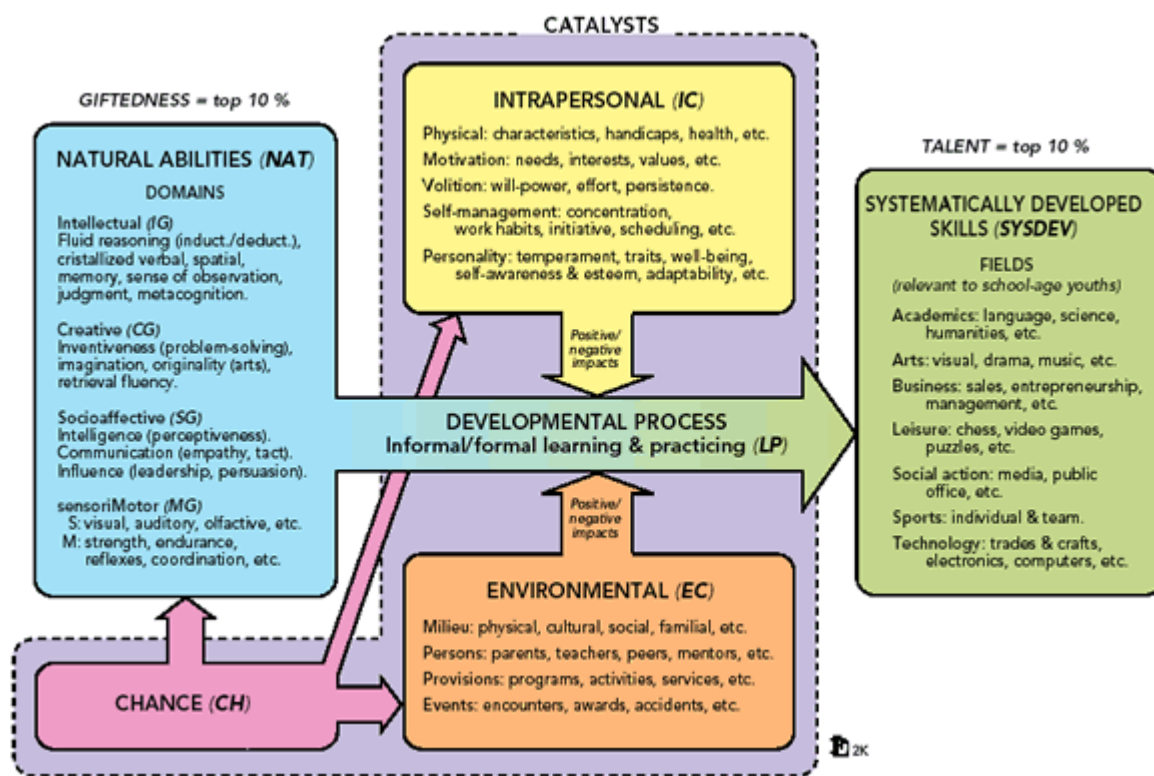
1. Introduction

The definition of giftedness and talent that is most widely used is that of François Gagné. Gagné proposes a distinction between giftedness and talent that is well grounded in research on human abilities. Gagné argues that the terms *giftedness* and *talent* should not be used synonymously.

In Gagné's model the following definitions apply.

Gifted students are those whose **potential** is distinctly above average in one or more of the following domains: intellectual, creative, social and physical.

Talented students are those whose **skills** are distinctly above average in one or more areas of human performance.



In Gagné's model, giftedness refers to innate ability in a domain or domains displayed in the left of the diagram. These abilities may combine in different ways to produce one or more specific talents as displayed in the right hand side of the diagram. Therefore high aptitude in the intellectual and creative domains may combine with the right environmental conditions to produce for example, a mathematician or linguist.

The Gagné model illustrates that an aptitude or combination of aptitudes develops into a talent as the result of systematic training and practice. It also shows that individual behaviour and environmental factors may help or hinder the development of talent even though the child is gifted.

At the centre of his model, Gagné includes a set of '*catalysts*' that are important in this regard. These catalysts include environmental factors such as family and school, personality factors (autonomy, self-confidence, self-esteem) and motivation (initiative, interests, persistence). Gagné's thesis is that these catalysts are critical in activating the translation of giftedness into talent and central to this translation as mentioned are the very important mediating effects of training and practice.

This is where the role of the school is pivotal. At Yeo Park Infants School we are committed to utilising research driven, high quality methodologies that improve outcomes for all students. These programs are grounded by best practice for early childhood education and our philosophy of high expectations. Exposure to new learning, divergent and creative and critical thinking is paramount; as is the development of independent individuals.

At Yeo Park Infants School, we believe it is vital that parents and carers work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcome for each and every child

One of the greatest gifts we can give a gifted child is the opportunity and encouragement to risk temporary 'failure' in the secure environment of a classroom which encourages all students, including the gifted, to let their reach exceed their grasp.

2. Identification

Students are identified using information from a variety of sources to gain a profile of the student. The identification process is managed by the LST (Learning and Support Team) which encompasses GaTs (Gifted and Talented student) education.

Sources of information may include:

- Teacher nomination
- Parent nomination
- Self or student nomination
- A report from a psychologist or specialist
- Analysis of school achievements and progress (academic, social and emotional) at Yeo Park Infants School and any previous schools

Because gifted children are so diverse, not all exhibit all characteristics all of the time. However, there are common characteristics that many gifted individuals share. The following are characteristics that gifted children often share but are not in themselves indicators:

- Ability to understand and use abstract symbol systems at a much younger age than usual (e.g. May 'pick up' reading by immersion without being taught)
- The ability to ask reflective and probing questions
- A rich vocabulary
- Can become absorbed in work that they find interesting
- Unusually swift rate of learning
- Dislike of slow-paced work
- Well-developed memory
- Seasons at a level more usually found in students some years older
- May prefer independent work
- Emotional intensity
- Often have unusually well-developed sense of justice and fairness

- may have an unusual capacity or ability to empathise with the feelings of others
- many have unusually mature sense of humour
- may prefer the companionship of adults or older students
- usually have different conceptions and expectations of friendships from those of their [peers]
- often exhibit perfectionist tendencies
- may find the need to develop their gifts and talents and feel pride in achievements at odds with the needs for acceptance of peers and need to feel the 'same'
- many enjoy reading and read with full enjoyment and understanding, books written for students some years older

3. Register of Identified Students

A register of identified students will be maintained at the school as part of the duties of the LST / GaTs team. Regular review and monitoring of identified student progress and need will be undertaken as part of LST / GaTs committee business and student monitoring.

4. Programs for Gifted and Talented Students

The GATS program is focused on the student within his/her classroom. Classroom programs are supported by whole school programs and specific options targeted at identified students. All external or specific programs operate within the resources available to the school and continuity of program delivery is dependent upon resource allocation. Individual Education Plans, (I.E.P.) will be devised by classroom teachers, in consultation with the GATS team, (as overseen by the LST), Parents or carers, any specialists involved, the School Counsellor, and the Student where necessary to meet educational needs.

At Yeo Park Infants School we recognise the importance of multiple approaches to meeting the needs of Gifted and or Talented students (and indeed all students).

Classroom Programs

Gifted and talented students require modification of content (what is learnt); process (teaching methods and thinking processes); product (medium of expression) and their learning environment.

Yeo Park Infants Schools' strategy is to adopt a variety of approaches to program modification which are qualitatively different entailing:

- Differentiation for all students is at the core of teaching and learning programs
- Use of Investigative learning to engage children in areas of interest or exposure to new areas – thus increasing the chances of developing skills into talents
- the study of more advanced concepts
- the use of higher order and critical and creative thinking skills
- teaching independence skills – raising the bar- including research and study skills

Options within the classroom include:

- ✓ curriculum compacting (moving through content quickly) or subject acceleration (i.e. in a particular area)
- ✓ backward mapping content from the known – i.e. Pre-testing and then developing teaching and learning sequences
- ✓ open ended activities that promote divergent thinking and production
- ✓ emphasis placed on creative thinking and problem solving across Key Learning Areas
- ✓ Independent and group work
- ✓ in depth study of areas of interest
- ✓ negotiated contracts
- ✓ training students in research and study skills
- ✓ where possible, cohorts of gifted students in classroom groups

Whole School Programs:

Yeo Park Infants School provides a range of extension programs within its core curriculum. Programs include:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| ✓ Music Program | ✓ Opportunities for performance |
| ✓ Public Speaking | ✓ Sport Programs / Carnivals |
| ✓ Drama | ✓ Leadership opportunities |

Specific Programs:

Specific programs may be utilised to extend classroom and whole school programs in particular instances. These programs operate within the resources available to the school and are implemented based on an identified need.

Options may include:

- specific workshops (organisational patterns can include half day programs, a series of half day programs, full day programs and programs at other school)
- early entry to school
- acceleration (vertical grouping and grade skipping)
- robotics or technology programs

5. GATS Team

The GATS team is a sub-committee of the L.S.T. (Learning Support Team). The role of the team is:

- to provide information to the school community on opportunities for gifted and talented students available in the community (e.g. Enrichment weekends and camps, Community resources, support groups, professional associations)
- to organise extra opportunities for identified students where resources permit
- to monitor the GATS identification process and maintain the GATS register
- to identify and acquire teaching resources for gifted and talented students
- to manage the professional development program for teaching gifted and talented students
- organise seminars for interested parents

At Yeo Park Infants School the LST team / GaTs team is coordinated by a staff member with Principal supervision. All teachers are members of this team.

6. Early Entry to Kindergarten

Early entry is an option available. Parents may request early entry. The Department of Education has determined specific criteria. The criteria are:

- the child is within six months of the approved Kindergarten entry age
- the child is identified as being in the superior range of the Kindergarten cohort
- the child is well adjusted socially and emotionally
- the child should be placed at the beginning of the school year or the end of Term 1 at the latest
- notification should occur by the end of Term 3 prior to placement in the following year
- the placement, if approved, will be reviewed after one term.

The process to advise the Principal of the appropriateness of such placement will include:

- a comprehensive evaluation of the child's intellectual functioning, academic skills and social-emotional adjustment conducted by the school counsellor or registered psychologist
- parental input regarding the social-emotional adjustment of the child
- a written report from the child's pre-school if they participate in such a program
- a meeting between the parents, the Principal and the school counsellor will be held after the evaluation is complete to discuss the suitability of early entry.

If agreement cannot be reached, the Principal will determine the suitability of the early entry option. The parents have the right of appeal to the School Education Director Canterbury Region.

7. Acceleration (*vertical grouping or grade skipping*)

Accelerated progression is an option available to students, as recommended by the GATS team. Parents or teachers may refer a student to the GATS team to be considered for acceleration. The student should demonstrate levels of knowledge and skills that are significantly above the average of the grade he or she desires to enter. It is preferable that students remain within a peer group and are extended within class if possible.

For students new to the school, reports, documents and samples of work which support the nomination are required. A trial period in a class equivalent to the student's age and years of schooling is required.

The process for consideration for placement on an acceleration program is:

- an acceleration nomination request is received from either a parent or teacher
- the student and parent(s) approve and are positive to the idea of acceleration.
- in the case of grade skipping, comprehensive psychological and academic assessment are conducted
- in the case of vertical grouping, a complete academic assessment is conducted
- teachers and parents complete an acceleration checklist
- a meeting comprising the Principal, parent(s), school counsellor, present class teacher, receiving class teacher and the GATS team to discuss the information and discuss options
- the results of this meeting are discussed with the student as appropriate
- if the acceleration is the preferred option, the student enters the new class on a provisional basis for one term and then placement is reviewed. This is carefully monitored with regular review.
- the child should be placed at the beginning of the school year or the end of Term 1, at the latest, where practical.

If agreement cannot be reached, the Principal will determine the suitability of acceleration. The parents have the right of appeal to the School Education Director, Canterbury Region

For further information on NSW Department of Education Policy on Gifted and Talented Education please go to:

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/curriculum/schools/gats/PD20040051.shtml>

For further information for parents and carers in regard to giftedness and talent please go to:

<http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/development/is-your-child-gifted>

<http://www.aaegt.net.au/>

Resources:

Gagné, F. (2003). Transforming gifts into talents: The DMGT as a developmental theory. In N. Colangelo & G. A. Davis (Eds.) Handbook of gifted education (3rd edition). (pp. 60-73). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Gross, M. U. M. (2004). Exceptionally gifted children (2nd edition). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Harrison, C. (2003). Giftedness in early childhood (3rd edition). Sydney: GERRIC.