

TO GO BEYOND THE KNOWN...



reaching for a better world....



Is this really relevant for you? Read on to find out....

Hello and welcome to our first bulletin of the year.

Yes, it's mostly about working with your most able students – and yes, this is truly relevant for you, whether you're teaching at high school, intermediate or primary, whatever your curriculum specialty, and whether you're at the chalkface or in management. Why? Mostly, of course, because research has quite unequivocally demonstrated that gifted learners are found in every school, in students from every culture and from all family backgrounds – and also that disturbing numbers of them are not actually recognised at school. We need to do better than that. But also because the work we do in gifted education covers innovative strategies that often help other students too in very positive ways. For example, did you know that cooperative learning was first developed as a strategy for working with gifted learners?

If you'd like to know any more about anything in this bulletin, just email us at reacheducation@xtra.co.nz and we'll get right back to you. In this issue, we're going to share with you a provocative little thought-piece from internationally renowned expert, Dr Linda Silverman, as well as other items of news. But first:

STOP PRESS!!

We'd like to remind all teachers that we are currently enrolling for this year's delivery of

The Certificate of Effective Practice in Gifted Education

This is a course which has a strong focus on practical strategies achievable in the regular classroom as well as in group situations. Year after year participants tell us how valuable it has been for them – many say it's the best PLD they've ever done, helping them with all their teaching. Available for teachers at all levels of schooling, the course offers:

- Continuous individual tutor support throughout from experienced practitioners in the field
- A comprehensive collection of resources and references for your ongoing use
- Coverage of all aspects of identifying and working with exceptionally able students and developing provision in your school
- Straightforward and convenient online access (and no reliever's costs!)
- An affordable fee.

See the interesting list of topics covered at the end of this bulletin! Meanwhile:

Enrolments close March 6!

Prospectus & enrolment form available from reacheducation@xtra.co.nz or www.giftedreach.org.nz





Is Height a Social Disease?

Submitted by Linda Silverman on Mon, 2015-11-02 18:07

Linda's Column

I would like to propose a cure for height. Height is a social construction that provides unfair advantage to tall people. Studies have shown that tall people are favored as leaders, are picked more frequently to play basketball, and can reach things that short people cannot. This makes short people feel inferior. There is no reason why some people are taller than others. The popular press has firmly negated the role of heredity; therefore, no thinking person should assume that heredity has anything whatsoever to do with it. In an egalitarian world, it is important that everyone have equal opportunity for height. Therefore, all children who are above the average height should have reduced nutrition to stunt unseemly growth. If they persist on remaining tall, they should be hidden and not allowed to interact with other children, as their presence may cause undue insecurity in shorter children. Any children below the average height should be given growth hormones until they reach average height. In order to preserve our democratic way of life, it is essential that everyone be average so that everyone has equal opportunity.

Linda Leviton added: They should be shamed for their unfair height advantage, so that they learn to minimize it by slouching or staying seated when others stand. Denying heredity, the press touts pills and exercises to enhance growth.

Shelagh Gallagher commented: We could reduce the criteria for "tall" so that average height people could be considered tall and we could ignore the difference between those who just meet the criteria and those who pass it by several inches.

Tom Kemnitz remarked: You failed to mention that tall people get more clothing for the same price in most shops.

Linda again: If you substitute "intelligence" for "height," you may begin to examine our society's core beliefs about high intelligence (giftedness) through a new lens. At the end of the 19th century, brilliant children were, indeed, hidden in their houses. In our zeal to bring up the bottom, we are starving the intellects of the most advanced students. The American press abhors the science of heritability, glorifying "practice, practice, practice." By blurring the distinction between success and high intelligence, it is easy to come to the conclusion that it is appropriate to "stunt unseemly growth" in order to protect equal opportunity. Success is a race. Intelligence is not. I am far from the first person to satirize the condition of the gifted. See Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s Harrison Bergeron, which begins:

"THE YEAR WAS 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else..." <http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/harrison.html>

Is average really the goal? Or should we be cultivating intellectual diversity as much as cultural diversity?

Linda Leviton and Shelagh Gallagher are both consultants in gifted education in the US; Tom Kemnitz is editor at Royal Fireworks Publishing which carries many gifted education texts.

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He has already asked "Why?" 100 times today... and it's only 8:00 in the morning.

*Identifying gifted learners
isn't as hard as we sometimes think -
they generally start young!*

Update on interesting book opportunity for your students.....

In our last bulletin we told you about this special project from two well-known New Zealand educators, Elaine Le Sueur and Margaret Mooney. Time is now running out!

ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Elaine Le Sueur & Margaret Mooney

AN INVITATION:

We are in the process of putting together a non-fiction biographical book to show our smart school age students that they can learn from each other as well as famous people in the community. If you are (or you know of/ can recommend) a student who has made or is attempting to make a positive difference to the lives of others through a project that they are engaged in (and would like to participate) then we would love to hear from you. Someone else can write the article but it needs to be a true story with how the student dealt with any issues that arose as they went along. If the biography is included in the book then he/she will get a free copy when it is published. Any profits made from sales of the book will be donated to the Starship Foundation.

All biographical articles must be completed by the end of **Term 1, 2016** to be considered. Every student entry (whether published or not) will go into the draw for a full class set of Monster Bookmarks. Each one is different. Winner will be drawn in the Easter holidays, and the result published in Good Teacher, Term 2, 2016.

If you have any queries you can contact us at justelain@xtra.co.nz (Elaine) or margaretmooney@xtra.co.nz margaretmooney@xtra.co.nz (Margaret) with the words "gifted bio" in the subject line.

Elaine and Margaret have a set of useful hints for any interested young writers. They also have the necessary permission slips and other information your authors will need. Please email them, and they'll be very happy to email you straight back.



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Help for GATE coordinators!

Do we hear you asking "What's a GATE coordinator?" That question means your school probably hasn't got one – but this is in the category of "Every school needs one!" If you do know the answer, then you'll know that GATE stands for "Gifted And Talented Education", and the coordinator is the person who has responsibility for what happens for gifted learners in your school. In some schools, that just means taking a group for one or two hours a week. But other schools see far more potential in the role – eg making policy, managing a budget, devising programmes, and/or taking PLD for other staff at

your school. We have many GATE coordinators taking our Certificate course, but where appropriate, we can also offer specific support for particular tasks. For example, we can help you review your current policy or your identification process, and so on.

Like to know more? Contact our director Rosemary Cathcart at reacheducation@xtra.co.nz.

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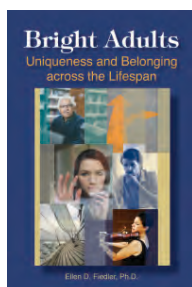
Books we think you will find interesting!

NB: We suggest you check first with Dorne, resource person at www.learningnetwork.ac.nz, ph. 09 835 0912, about the availability of any of these books – Learning Network NZ has a focus in this area.

First, for your students (and you!), **Stephanie Tolan** is a multiple award-winning author of challenging high-interest novels for intelligent sensitive young people, and also a noted writer about giftedness. We'd particularly recommend *The Plague Year*, an extraordinary and compelling story about bullying with an ending one should expect but probably won't, and *Surviving the Applewhites* and *Applewhites at Wit's End*, about a troubled gifted teenager coming to live with a family who have an "alternative" life style, written with humour and insight. Used as set texts in the US. If Learning Network doesn't have copies, can be bought through Amazon. Check out Tolan's website too, not only for information about her other books, but also for her series of thoughtful and thought-provoking articles on giftedness – www.stephanietolan.com.

High school teachers! You may well know the name of **Sonia White**, a Ministry advisor on gifted students for many years. Sonia has drawn on her extensive experience to compile an information and idea packed resource book, *Designing Defensible Classroom Programs for Gifted Secondary School Learners*. It's rare to find material at this level – especially New Zealand material. Copies are obtainable through Sonia at Sonia@gifteconsultant.ac.nz.

Teaching New Entrants or up to Year 4? New Zealand material is rare here too! So don't forget to look out for *Giftedness in the Early Years: Informing Learning and Teaching*, edited by Valerie Margrain, Caterina Murphy and Jo Dean and published just last year by the NZCER.



This could be relevant for you! *Bright Adults: Uniqueness and Belonging Across the Lifespan* is a new release from **Dr Ellen Fiedler**, internationally respected expert in this field. Published by Great Potential Press, this topic is rarely dealt with but is hugely important for those affected. One reviewer, Jim DeLisle, describes it as "Expertly researched and masterfully written", taking the reader through all the stages of growing up gifted from young adult "voyagers" to "elder cruisers", with practical ideas for each stage. "You will identify with the wisdom in this sailing adventure through gifted adulthood", says DeLisle.

And a reminder of two books by **Rosemary Cathcart**, *Differentiation Made Practical* and *Gifted Programming Made Practical*. Reviewing *Differentiation Made Practical*, Lynda Garrett from the University of Auckland wrote, "The title of this book premises plenty and delivers it all!" Differentiation is so often put in the "too-hard" basket. This book offers a new and achievable approach, while its companion offers sensible practical advice to those finding themselves responsible for gifted provision in their schools.



Scroll down for our Certificate course overview.....

Certificate of Effective Practice in Gifted Education: Brief Course Overview

Module One

Focus: What do we mean when we talk about giftedness?

Module Two

Focus: Tools we can use to help us identify individual gifted learners.

Module Three

Focus: Who can help us identify gifted learners? Are there internal factors which can prevent giftedness from being recognised or which impact on its development and expression?

Module Four

Focus: Are there external factors which can prevent giftedness from being recognised or which impact on its development and expression?

Module Five

Focus: Introducing practical strategies for working with gifted learners. Learning environments. Introducing conceptual planning and an innovative approach to making differentiation workable.

Module Six

Focus: Starting our exploration of the REACH Key Concepts: generating interest and engagement in gifted learners.

Module Seven

Focus: Continuing with the Tools of Thought – looking at essential advanced skills.

Module Eight

Focus: Challenging the gifted mind and imagination – strategies specific to gifted learners.

Module Nine

Focus: Creativity & giftedness: should we expect gifted learners to be creative individuals? What IS creativity?

Module Ten

Focus: Thinking about the gifted learner's development as a person: what are the ultimate goals or purposes of gifted education for the gifted learner?

Module Eleven

Focus: Continuing with the gifted learner's development as a whole person.

Module Twelve

Focus: The final chapter: bringing it all together, and where to from here?

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*Gifted learners often try
really hard not to stand out
from their peers.....
what's the problem here???
Look closely.....*