



EVENTS

Celebrate Gifted Awareness Week
15-22 June

Linda Silverman—One Day Only! 19 June
REACH Education

Students of Promise: Beyond the Gifted Stereotype 7-10 July (see page 3 for details)

18th World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children, Vancouver, 3-7 August

Visit our website for more events!

www.giftednz.org.nz

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Message from your chairperson

I am both humbled and delighted to have been elected as the Chairperson of giftEDnz the Professional Association for Gifted Education. The goals of the association are important to me, personally and professionally, in my roles as a teacher educator, researcher and advocate. I look forward to working with and nurturing our members to full potential as professionals in gifted and talented education.

I am also fortunate to be working with such a fabulous Board of dedicated professionals. We met in April for the first time and had a productive meeting. The highlights of our meeting included:

The election of officers. As you have no doubt worked out, I was elected as Chairperson.

Supporting me is Louise Tapper, who is serving as Deputy Chairperson. Ann Easter is serving as Secretary. The position of Treasurer will be determined in the near future.

Co-opting members. The Board will co-opt two members representing Māori perspectives and early childhood education.

Portfolios. A range of portfolios have been developed and are being shared by Board members. Louise Tapper and I will be working together on advocacy, communications and publicity. I will also be working with Rosemary Cathcart on publications. Anne Sturgess and Ann Easter will be working together on the website development and online resources. Finally, Louise and Rosemary are sharing the portfolio for networking and confer-

encing.

Our vision is that as these portfolios develop, sub-committees will be formed to support us in our work. As members we value your enthusiasm and expertise, and we will be in touch! As our website says, "You need us! We need you!" So we are counting on you to make this association **your** association for gifted and talented education.

Finally, I would like to thank you, the members of giftEDnz, for your confidence in me and my fellow Board members in leading this association forward. I would also like to thank the Steering Committee, alongside Conference and Events staff, for their work and preparation in getting us to this point.

Tracy Riley

giftednewz

The Online Newsletter of the Professional Association for Gifted Education

One of the goals of giftEDnz is to provide publications for our members. Another goal is to facilitate opportunities for networking and sharing. It is our hope that this newsletter will make those links - connecting our members with one another, as well as with ideas and infor-

mation.

This first issue of the newsletter includes many resources, ideas, upcoming events and stories from our members, all with the practitioner in mind. We have also included information about some of our members, as well as the perspectives of your

Board.

Our aim is to provide a newsletter each term, so please send us any feedback, suggestions, news of upcoming events or resources and ideas. We welcome your contributions!

Tracy and Rosemary

It is both exciting and timely that advocates are joining together to raise awareness of the needs of our gifted and talented learners .

We appreciate the many developments the advisors have scaffolded throughout New Zealand, and the difference they have made for so many children.



Louise Tapper, Anne Sturgess, Ann Easter, Tracy Riley & Rosemary Cathcart

Celebrate Gifted Awareness Week!

For the first time in New Zealand's history, national and regional gifted educational organisations have combined forces to highlight the needs of gifted students in our country. Gifted Awareness Week will be promoted and celebrated across New Zealand from the 15th - 22nd June.

Support our collaborative partners in Gifted Awareness Week:

New Zealand Association for Gifted Children
 Gifted Education Centre
 Gifted Kids Programme
 REACH Education
 Christchurch Association for Gifted Education
 Waikato Association for Gifted Children
 Otago Association for Gifted and Talented
 Canterbury Association for Gifted Children and Youth
 North Canterbury Support for Gifted and Talented Children

National Government cuts advisory support

Gifted education advisory support to schools was terminated as part of the education 'savings' announced in Budget 09.

This is a deeply worrying move for gifted education. The advisors are the first line of support for schools and individual teachers, and have provided invaluable guidance, despite being stretched by being far too few in number for the size of the task involved. Given that the 2008 ERO Report on Schools' Provisions for Gifted and Tal-

ented Students emphasises the need for more professional development in this field, the decision to cut these positions is inexplicable and extremely short-sighted.

While there are indications of some continued support, it is not clear how much funding is available, nor how this will be spent. Whatever the decisions in this regard, the loss of access to this scarce resource of professional expertise is a major step backwards.

Your Board has responded with a press release and letters to MPs. We urge you too to take action as part of Gifted Awareness Week by writing to your local MPs and encouraging local media coverage. The more protest is made, the better our chances of being listened to.

Regardless of the eventual outcome, we want to acknowledge here the work undertaken by our advisors and the contributions made to gifted and talented education.

Your Board in action!

Your Board has been busy! Some highlights of our work over the last few months are:

- Analysis of survey results to inform our annual plan.
- Conference database under development.
- Letters of introduction and gifted education fact sheet sent to Parliamentary education spokespeople and lead-

ers.

- Bookmarks and postcards being developed and distributed.
- Liaison with gifted education associations and organisations for Gifted Awareness Week collaborative events.
- Website review underway.
- Survey to professional asso-

ciations being developed to inform them about gifted and talented education.

- Media releases in response to cuts to advisory services.

We are also coming up to speed with the advantages of technology! Using tools like Doodle, Skype, and Google Docs has been challenging!

We would love to hear from you. Please get involved!

Celebrate Gifted Awareness Week!

Showcase the work of gifted and talented learners throughout your school.

Provide a parent, whanau and community information evening for sharing your organisation's initiatives in gifted and talented education.

Feature gifted and talented education in your newsletter.

Run a competition for students – this could be anything from a chess day to a poster contest.

Share your achievements and those of your students with the local newspaper – ask for a feature story or write a letter to the editor.

Write to your local Member of Parliament or invite your local MP to

visit. Encourage him or her to talk with teachers, students and parents.

Encourage your gifted and talented learners and their parents to contact their local MPs, sharing their experiences.

Facilitate gifted and talented learners in the creative expression of their experiences with the aim of sending a 'gift' to their local MPs. For example, they might write a poem, create a story, draw a picture or write a jingle or lyrics.

Host a movie evening! Show a film about gifted and talented individuals. See Hoagie's web page for ideas

Run a book discussion group based on biographical or fictional depictions

of giftedness. See Hoagie's for some great ideas!

Dedicate a staff meeting to professional discussions and dialogue about gifted and talented education.

Distribute professional readings to your staff about gifted and talented education. Facilitate professional discussions about these.

Have a special day to celebrate giftedness. Perhaps you could set aside 'a tall poppies day' when students dress in red, draw or create poppies, or plant a garden of poppies.

Students can dress as their gifted and talented heroes and heroines and have a 'hero parade'!

Gifted Awareness Week Competition for all ages! See NZAGC's website www.giftedchildren.org.nz

This course is a fantastic opportunity for principals and teachers to spend four days with an intensive focus on how to cast a wide net to cater more effectively for this group of learners in their schools and communities.

TRCC Conference: Students of Promise

TRCC (Teachers' Refresher Course Committee) are interested in 'casting a wide net' with their upcoming course **'Students of Promise'** for gifted and talented educators.

The conference is targeted at primary and secondary teachers and principals, gifted education coordinators, and RTLBs. The conference organisers are also keen to include principals and senior managers.

Keynote speakers include Roger Moltzen, Anne Sturgess, and Angus Macfarlane. As part of the course, Pam Hook will also present a full-day workshop on a new curriculum model to meet the needs of diverse students. Other invited presenters include Leean Herewini and Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna who will be part of a day focusing on cultural perspectives of giftedness and talent.

There will also be a range of con-

current workshops where practitioners share successful models and effective teaching and learning strategies for gifted and talented students in the regular classroom.

For more information about the Students of Promise course to be held from 7– 10th July at the Quality Hotel in Wellington, please visit: www.trcc.org.nz

Congratulations!



NZ Future Problem Solving Teams do it again!

Once again our teams have represented us well in the 2009 International competition at the University of Michigan. Our teams brought home 2 first place, 3 second place, a third, a fourth, and 2 fifth place awards!

Our warm congratulations to the teams from Kristin School, Kim-

bolton School, Cobham Intermediate, Mangawhai Beach School, and Nelson College. We'd also like to congratulate Megan de Klerk of Kerikeri High, Julie Styan of NZFPS, and Catherine Salmons of Rangitoto College. Well done!

You can read more about their winnings and get involved by checking out the FPS website:

<http://www.fpsnz.co.nz/>

The New Zealand Association for Gifted Children is proud to announce the latest issue of **APEX**
The NZ Journal of Gifted Education.



We urge our members to support this journal with your contributions!

Visit the APEX website at

<http://www.giftedchildren.org.nz/apex/v15no1.php>

*Our members
really shine!
Congratulations
for these
outstanding
achievements.*

More Congratulations!

Robyn Boswell, Advisor to Schools at University of Auckland and Director, Future Problem Solving

Robyn was awarded the Queen's Service Medal for her work in education. You can read more about Robyn below.

Jenny Horsley, Senior Lecturer at Victoria University

As the inaugural recipient of the Fulbright-CERT Scholar Award in Education Research, Jenny is spending three months at Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth in Baltimore,

where she will investigate American models for increasing representation of ethnic minorities in programmes for gifted children.

Dr Brenda Bicknell, Senior Lecturer at Massey University

Brenda successfully defended her PhD on mathematically gifted students! You can read more about her research on page 5.

Do you know of an achievement you want to share? Let us know about our members!



**Robyn Boswell,
Recipient of a
Queen's Service
Medal for her
contributions to
education**

Robyn Boswell: QSM

It was with real joy that we heard the announcement that Robyn Boswell had been awarded the Queen's Service Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

This quite extraordinarily humble and generous New Zealander has made a unique and far-reaching contribution to education in this country. As a teacher she has a passion for creating authentic learning experiences for children which motivate and challenge them, and as an advisor, she has the ability to inspire and motivate teachers. Her impact on Northland schools has been immense.

But it is through Future Problem Solving that Robyn has made the greatest difference. It was Robyn who saw the value of this programme and introduced it to New Zealand. From extremely modest beginnings in a small Northland school, she has led its growth to the point where thousands of young New Zealanders are being exposed to the hugely valuable life skills this programme embodies.

She has taken small teams of 20 to 30 young New Zealanders to tournaments with over 2000 competitors from over 40 American States, Korea, Russia, Japan, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong and Singapore, and has had her teams win the equivalent of Olympic medals, not once, but time after time, coming home with up to *nine* first, second and third "medals" plus numerous additional placings. New Zealand teams participating in these tournaments have in fact led the world three years in a row in the final results, with many overall grand champion winners coming from New Zealand. This year's results, published on page 3 in this newsletter, simply continue the trend.

Robyn has achieved these uniquely outstanding results without official funding or support, and as an unpaid volunteer, giving countless thousands of hours of her own time to help children and support coaches. Yet until now her work has never been officially or publicly recognised. At last some recognition has come, and there could not possibly be another teacher in New Zealand who deserves it more.

Well done, Robyn; long may you continue to enlighten and inspire us.

The Board of giftEDnz

*We want to hear
from you!*

Share your perspectives by
contributing to giftednewz!

Email Tracy

T.L.Riley@massey.ac.nz

Rosemary

reacheducation@xtra.co.nz

Principals' Perspectives

We're reserving this space for those of you who as principals have a unique role in your schools in overseeing provision for gifted students. What are the issues for you? We'd like to hear ideas that have worked for developing provisions in your schools, and

we'd like to see this space also being used for discussion on the issues that are relevant for you.

Students' Perspectives

Let's remember the students! If ever there was a group of learners who are articulate about their learning needs, then surely that's gifted learn-

ers! These students have much to share with us about their experience of school, of teachers, and of gifted programmes. We hope to feature some of their stories in this space, but for this to happen, we need you to help us make contact with them. Please email us! We'd love to hear your ideas and about you!

From the chalkface ...



**Maree Quill,
Hamilton West
School**

As I write this I am very excited about the new collegial spirit developing amongst providers of gifted education.

My dream for our gifted and talented students is that they are identified early and provided with programmes or mentors in a seamless progression through schooling to University.

My favourite aspect of working with gifted and talented students is fanning a new fire or interest in the students and then seeing them devote time in pursuing it.

My best resource for working with gifted and talented students is *Thinking, Feeling and Learning: Understanding the social and emotional needs of gifted students*

If I were 'in charge', the first thing I would do for our gifted and talented students is insist that all

teacher trainees had compulsory modules in gifted education.

My advice: study several models of provision and modify to suit the students' needs and the schools' aspirations.

The perspective I wasn't asked: nervousness of educators who worry that their programmes may not be challenging enough. There is a great need to share without fear of criticism, so that some "common" aspirations for gifted programmes can be outlined.

My message to Government regarding gifted and talented education is that "contestable funding" is inequitable and all schools need funds to develop their programmes.

Recommendations

This space is for you! Here's where we're asking members to share information about resources they would recommend to others. We're defining "resources" very broadly - this could be a book, a person, a website, an item of equipment, etc, but the main focus is that the resource you describe is practical and teacher friendly. For example, Rosemary Cathcart has contributed this review.

Personal Best: Practical suggestions on how to achieve genuine quality in

written language and *Observation at the Outset: The role of drawing in the process of enquiry*: Two wonderful little books from an inspirational teacher, richly packed with samples of children's work to illustrate the highly effective teaching points being made by author Bill Clarkson. Although not particularly written with the gifted child in mind, both these books are very much in tune with the way a gifted child sees the world, building on the curiosity and keen, perceptive observation so very

typical of these children. Both books offer a raft of practical strategies to aid the teacher, and the use of drawing has additional resonance as we acknowledge the needs of our visual-spatial learners. Two of my personal favourites for many years, I'm delighted to discover they are now back in print, along with three new additions, *Unique Perspectives*, *Unique Topics* and *Thinking Out Loud*. For more information, email Bill Clarkson at wmc.np@xtra.co.nz.

Do you know of a 'must have' resource for educators?

Email Tracy or Rosemary your gold-mine finds!

Research to practice

Mathematically Gifted and Talented Students

Brenda Bicknell

My study, undertaken at Massey University, examined the education of a group of fifteen Year 6 and Year 8 students identified as mathematically gifted and talented using evidence from school policy documents; student, teacher, and parent interviews; questionnaires; and classroom observations. The students were tracked over a

two-year period which included a school transfer.

The research showed that there was limited understanding about the characteristics of mathematically gifted students. Provision of appropriate programmes was variable and determined by factors such as school organisation, identification, teacher knowledge and expertise, and resources. The parents played a key role in their children's mathematics education.

This study provided insights into the various determinants of the development of mathematical talent. It provided evidence that understanding characteristics is important and that identification processes must reflect this understanding. Provisions must be well considered and evaluated; the role of parents should be understood and valued; and home-school communications strengthened.



Dr Brenda Bicknell



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**The Professional Association for
Gifted Education**

The goals of our association are:

- To advocate for equitable educational opportunities for gifted and talented students.
- To enhance the profile of gifted and talented education in New Zealand.
- To create a professional community for networking, supporting and learning.
- To encourage the pursuit and sharing of best practice in gifted and talented education.
- To provide liaison with international organizations and other national associations for gifted and talented education.

**WE NEED YOU, YOU NEED US!
GET INVOLVED IN YOUR
ASSOCIATION!**

Share Your Ideas

We would love to hear from you! If you have ideas for the newsletter or a contribution to make, please contact Tracy or Rosemary. We are particularly interested in hearing about:

- Local conferences and events
- Resources for working with gifted and talented students
- Our members and those they work with

Email Tracy (T.L.Riley@massey.ac.nz) or Rosemary (reacheducation@xtra.co.nz)

DEADLINE FOR TERM 3 NEWSLETTER: 31 AUGUST

Postcard from Beijing



John Van Der Zwan is the Elementary School Enrichment Coordinator at Western Academy of Beijing and responsible for providing consultancy support for the provision of an enriched nursery to grade five curriculum.

WAB is a leading nursery to grade twelve IB world school with over 1600 students representing more than 40 different nationalities. A kiwi in Beijing, John is a member of giftEDnz.

A Shorts and Jandals Approach to Identification

Sporting shorts and jandals, I was out walking the other day. Shorts are not a big deal for any self respecting Kiwi but in China, hair on one's legs is a significant difference and to show it, attracts atten-

tion. The staring and sniggering just comes with the territory. I even think I heard the word *monkey* at one point, but I draw the line when hands start edging in for a touch.

It is experiences like this that remind me that I am living in a very different culture and for the most part, we simply do not understand each other. It is not that I don't want to understand, I just haven't put enough time into learning how. Out walking, it is not until I meet another expat sporting shorts and jandals, that I feel less of a spectacle, or observer, and feel a sense of familiarity and connection again. Simply put, I feel better when I am back in an environment where I feel I am more understood.

In this sense, giftedness is similar. We all feel better when we are understood and a lack of being understood may be the biggest chal-

lenge facing gifted learners in national and international schools alike. It is easy to make judgments when recognizing our most observable characteristics but these often may not accurately portray whom we really are. Shorts and jandals say nothing more than, in this context, at this time, there is something different about me.

The goal of identification must therefore be to help us better understand our students who live with giftedness and display talent. This goes beyond recognition and strategies to simply identify. It reminds us that identification is as much a social inter-action, often crossing cultural divides, as it is an academic procedure. Bye from Beijing and if you are ever over this way please pop in.

John

jjzwan@wab.edu