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Gifted and Talented Students

The Australian Curriculum seeks to make teachers at all levels of schooling aware of the inclusive nature of the framework. In particular, the requirement that the learning needs of gifted students be addressed is clearly stated in the document.

Gifted and talented students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning opportunities and aligned with their individual strengths and, in some cases, learning difficulties.

The document makes it clear that gifted and talented students;

- ▶ are not a homogeneous group
- ▶ may also have a disability and / or English as an additional language or dialect
- ▶ may need modifications to some aspects of their learning and may not require the same, if any, in others.

It is also intimated that any adjustment be the subject of on-going consultation and review with both students and parents.

Typical of adjustments for gifted students include:

- ▶ Enrichment (i.e. going broader) This may see teachers drawing on learning area content from higher levels along the Foundation to Year 10 sequence and / or from materials from local sources.
- ▶ Extension (i.e. going deeper) This may see students exploring current interests / abilities within content areas at deeper levels of investigation.
- ▶ Acceleration (i.e. going faster) Here students, through strategies such as curriculum compacting, work in areas of strength progressing through content areas at the rate commensurate with their ability.

More details about each of these options appear in the chapters that follow.

Background to the Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum sets out the essential knowledge, understandings, skills and general capabilities important for all Australian students. It is designed as a platform to:

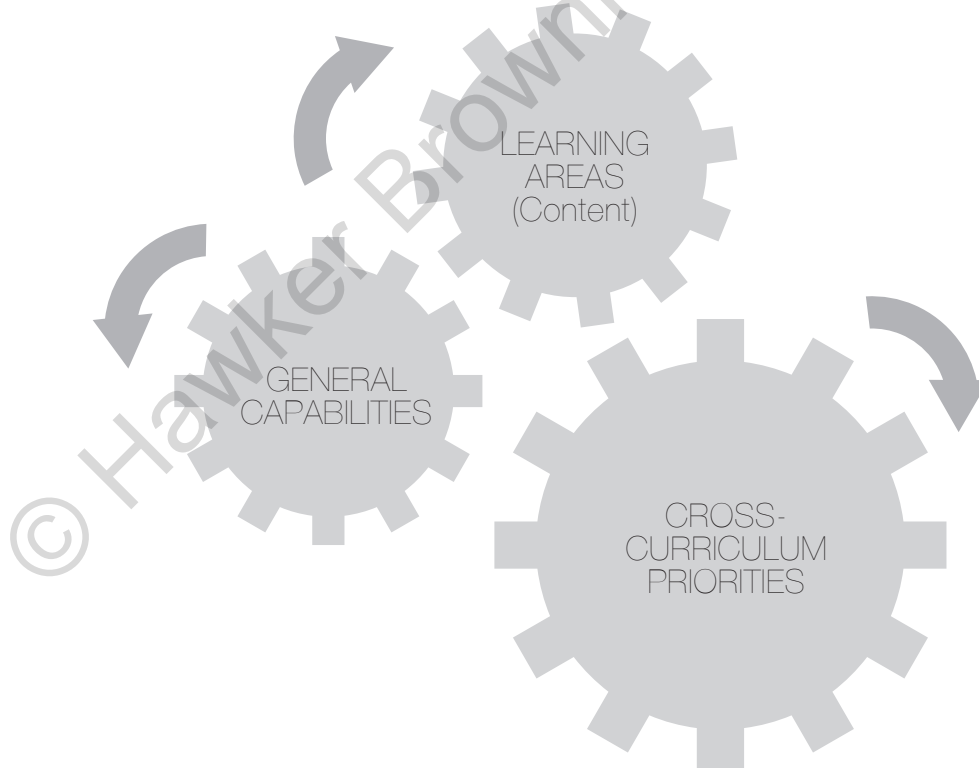
- ▶ Launch students into future learning, growth and active participation in the Australian community.
- ▶ Clarify what all young Australians should learn as they progress through their schooling.
- ▶ Highlight the high quality teaching required to meet the needs of all Australian students.

The Australian Curriculum acknowledges the need to meet diverse learning needs, and acknowledges gifted and talented students as a group of learners who may have different learning needs than some other students.

As suggested in the diagram below, outcomes such as knowledge, understanding and skills are targeted within each of the learning areas.

The General Capabilities and Cross-Curriculum Priorities are seen as the other basic elements necessary to support a robust curriculum for 21st-century learning.

Australian Curriculum



The Australian Curriculum is framed by these three dimensions, and it is the relationship between them that encourages the flexibility to create inclusive classrooms by attending to the diverse needs and capabilities of gifted and talented students in Australian schools.

Teachers can help meet individual learning needs of gifted and talented students by:

- ▶ emphasising one or more of the three dimensions of the curriculum.
- ▶ Infusing the specific teaching of the general capabilities into the content within learning areas
- ▶ Incorporating specific teaching of the cross-curriculum priorities through the content within learning areas
- ▶ Taking account of the range of their students' current levels of
 - Learning
 - Specific abilities and strengths
 - Individual goals and interests
- ▶ Personalising learning where necessary through adjustments made to the learning program. This may mean drawing from learning area content at different levels along the Foundation to Year 10 sequence; using the general capabilities and/or cross-curriculum priorities to adjust the learning focus and / or aligning individual learning goals with age-equivalent learning area content.

In a general sense, teachers can enrich gifted and talented student learning by:

- ▶ providing students with opportunities to work with learning area content in more depth
- ▶ providing students with opportunities to work with learning area content in more breadth
- ▶ targeting specific aspects of the general capabilities (e.g. the higher-order cognitive skills of the critical and creative thinking capability)
- ▶ focusing on cross-curriculum priorities.
- ▶ accelerating student learning by drawing on content from higher levels.

Introduction

Once agreement about what it means to be gifted in your own school context has been reached, one then has the basis for going about identifying the gifted population at the school.

It is important to identify the gifted population within the school, as this will subsequently guide decisions made about appropriate:

- ▶ learning environments
- ▶ curriculum provisions
- ▶ differentiation options
- ▶ progressive pathways
- ▶ school policies and the like.

In this section a range of different ways to identify giftedness in the school context are presented.

General Characteristics

All children tell us something about their abilities through the kinds of behaviour that they exhibit in a learning situation.

Careful, informed observation in a variety of learning situations and the recording of observed student behaviours provide the teacher with valuable information about a student's particular interests and abilities. Parents and caregivers can contribute greatly to this process.

Using this information, the teacher may be able to determine the nature of the curriculum modification required to enable the child to develop to their full potential. More likely, however, observation within the classroom will indicate the need for further investigation into strengths, interests and abilities.

Educational settings benefit from having in place a carefully balanced identification process based upon clearly defined purposes that reflect the ...

... Philosophy

... Vision and

... Values of the school ...

... as they relate to provisions for gifted students.

Purposes of an Identification Process

Identification processes provide the information that assists in curriculum planning decisions for identified students, as well as information upon which program modifications in the regular classroom may be based.

The use of a well-balanced range of appropriate identification techniques will help to:

... actively seek out the special talents, interests and abilities of students

... find students whose needs are not being met by the regular curriculum

... provide evidence to support the inclusion of an individual in a particular learning program

... indicate that a gifted student may be at a point significantly in advance of their age peers

... promote the awareness of the P-12 scope of the learning program required to service arising needs

... assist the affirmation of a teacher's professional evaluation of a student's abilities or potential

In particular, comprehensive identification strategies will provide the following:

