

GIFTED EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

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Australasia, consisting of eight states/territories across Australia and New Zealand, has been grappling with the concept of giftedness within an egalitarian framework since the 1970s, seeking to provide an educational system that fosters excellence in individuals, while aiming to avoid any claims of elitism and privilege (Braggett, 1993). Gifted education as a field of study in Australia and New Zealand began in the 1970s. The responsibility of providing education programs in primary and secondary schools exists at the state and territory level, but it is also influenced at a local level by parental awareness and demand, education policies, and teacher education. This has led to variability in the development of gifted education across Australasia.

Despite these differing influences, provisions for gifted and high ability students in Australia has existed in some form since the late 1800s (McGrath, 1993). In the primary sector of New South Wales (NSW), “opportunity classes” were initiated as early as 1932 (Braggett, 1985) to provide student challenge and guidance, as regular classes tended not to provide for “intellectual precocity in most primary schools, which were characterized by uniformity and conformity” (Braggett, 1993, p. 815). Tasmania followed, introducing opportunity classes in 1934, but abandoned the process because of the limited availability of skilled teachers, which was also a concern in NSW (Plunkett & Kronborg, 2007). This program still exists today: 75 primary schools offered opportunity classes in Grades 5 and 6 in

NSW, although in 2005 there were more primary programs available (approximately 100 classes). However, continuation of gifted education programs is often tenuous depending on the political party in government at the time (Braggett & Moltzen, 2000).

Gifted education varies across Australasia on the basis of individual state/territory policy perspectives, but it is also strongly influenced by the professional training in gifted education available to teachers at preservice and postgraduate levels at universities. Australia and New Zealand are considered to have innovative approaches to providing for the intellectual, social, and emotional needs of gifted and talented students, but teachers grapple with the requirements of the various educational systems. In addition, teachers must consider the ongoing individual needs of gifted and talented students as well as the diverse instructional and curriculum approaches that are available.

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Education in 1993 did not regard “the educational development of children with special abilities (such as giftedness or specific talents) as a policy goal in its own right” (Braggett, 1993, p. 819), but incorporated it within a broader policy of catering to all children with special needs. In 2015, this perspective continues to be maintained as the National Administration Guidelines for the Ministry of Education recommends that each school board, through the principal and staff, is required to “identify students and groups of students who have special needs (including gifted

and talented students)” (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2015). Yet, significant gains have been made in teachers’ awareness of the needs of gifted students. In 2001, the New Zealand Working Party on Gifted Education was established to provide advice on gifted education policy and a funding framework. This led to the Initiatives for Gifted and Talented Learners (Ministry of Education, 2002), which resulted in a major amendment to the National Administration Guidelines to include gifted and talented students. The initiatives included “a vision and set of core principles for supporting the achievement and well-being of gifted and talented learners and these were revised in 2011 by the Gifted and Talented Policy Advisory Group” (Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 9). In addition, in 2012, a substantial document was published by the Ministry of Education, which focused on gifted and talented students and the ways teachers can meet their educational needs. This document, which is based on relevant research, is ideal for teachers of gifted and talented students, as it focused on the conceptualization of giftedness and talent, characteristics of gifted and talented students, identification of gifted and talented students, differentiated programs in school for gifted and talented students, methods of self-review and recommended readings.

In Australia, the terms *gifted* and *talented* have been maintained (Parliament of Victoria, 2012; Senate References Committee, 2001), and gradually, gifted and talented students have been acknowledged as a diverse group of students who require differentiated educational provisions. However, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training, and Youth Affairs, 2008) provides the policy framework for the recently developed Australian Curriculum, which includes as its key goals the promotion of equity and excellence within Australian schooling and the idea that all young Australians are expected to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens (Australian Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2015). Within this broader policy framework, gifted and

talented students’ educational needs have been identified.

RELEVANT THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

In Australia and New Zealand, gifted education is based on a range of theoretical perspectives. Gagné’s (1993, 2003) differentiated model of giftedness and talent is the main theory promoted by the various departments of education across the states/territories of Australia (see Chapter 11, this handbook). However, the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, n.d.) acknowledges the theories of Gagné (2003), Tannenbaum (2003), and Renzulli (1986, 2003). The New Zealand Ministry of Education’s (2012) recommendations for theories to consider when educating gifted students highlights Renzulli’s (1978, 2002) concept of giftedness and his social capital model (see Chapter 12, this handbook). Gagné’s (2008, 2009) differentiated model of giftedness and talent, in addition to Gardner’s (1993) theory of multiple intelligences, are additional theories recommended to underpin school policies. A cultural concept of giftedness that considers gifted and talented Maori students (Bevan-Brown, 2009) is also acknowledged in New Zealand policies. Cultural indicators of giftedness are available for teachers to use on the basis of Bevan-Brown’s (2009) research investigating the essential differences in how special abilities are interpreted and manifested in different cultures in New Zealand.

In postgraduate studies in gifted education provided to teachers, administrators, and psychologists at Australian and New Zealand universities, a broad range of theories and research are introduced (Kronborg, 2015a, 2015b; Kronborg & Meyland, 2004; Taylor & Milton, 2006), and for some preservice teachers at universities, gifted education electives can improve their knowledge and understanding of gifted students’ educational needs. This is evident in studies examining Australian teachers’ knowledge of theories of giftedness and talent development, identification of gifted students, differentiated curriculum development, ability grouping, acceleration, and educational needs of special groups of gifted students

(Fraser-Seeto, Howard, & Woodcock, 2013; Harris & Henning, 2008; Hudson, Hudson, Lewis, & Watters, 2010; Plunkett & Kronborg, 2010; Watters & Diezmann, 2013; Watters, Hudson, & Hudson, 2013). Yet, various theories taught in gifted education teaching courses can vary, as the academics who choose which theories are taught are often influenced by individual interests, knowledge, and studies in gifted education and psychology, and earlier personal and professional experiences that influence their teaching and learning approaches to gifted education in schools.

Riley and Bicknell (2013) conducted a decade-long review of gifted and talented education in New Zealand, acknowledging the development of resources from the Ministry of Education, and increased professional development that had taken place. From the review, they noted the decline of support for gifted and talented education by the Ministry of Education, with cuts to funding and support in 2009, resulting in talent development initiatives being abandoned and the gifted and talent advisory group being disbanded. Also, ongoing changes to personnel responsible for gifted identification and provision created some disruption (Riley & Bicknell, 2013). Yet simultaneously, there was an increase in research, especially understandings of culturally responsive pedagogies (Ministry of Education, 2012), and a professional association for gifted education was created, as well as opportunities for advanced courses in gifted education at New Zealand universities (Riley & Bicknell, 2013).

The Australasian Journal for Gifted Education is the journal of the Australian Association for the Education of Gifted and Talented, which publishes research papers from academics and research students in areas of gifted education, talent development, and creativity from across Australian universities, but also includes a minority of research papers from other Asian countries. Since 2005, four to six research papers have been published in each issue of the journal on various aspects of gifted education that have been conducted within Australia. APEX, the New Zealand Journal of Gifted Education, is the journal of the

New Zealand Association for Gifted Children. It aims to disseminate four to seven essays, research papers, and critical comments on aspects of gifted and talented children annually.

Research in gifted education tends to emanate from academics in various Australian and New Zealand universities, often with financial support from the faculty, university, ministry of education, and/or individual school funds; yet in addition, research is also conducted without any provision of funds but comes about because an academic or their research student has an interest or problem to investigate in gifted education. However, as the field of gifted educators in schools has grown, there has been a concomitant increase in postgraduate research in issues of gifted education. But, the interest and development of gifted education, talent development, and twice-exceptional research has been gradual, resulting in the creation of a field of study in gifted education only at particular universities.

PRACTICE AND POLICY ISSUES

Educational practice for gifted students in primary and secondary schools is varied and flexible. Much depends on the school leadership's attitude toward gifted students and teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and interest in gifted students and their talent development (Plunkett & Kronborg, 2007). In Australia, there is an emphasis on selective high schools in Victoria and NSW, although selective programs within secondary schools exist in different forms across the states. Differentiated curriculum, independent inquiry, individual education programs (IEP) for twice-exceptional and underachieving gifted students, accelerated learning, cluster grouping, and mentoring are available for students in many primary and secondary schools in Australia and New Zealand, yet there are also schools with minimal or nonexistent programs for gifted students.

Australia

The ACARA is an independent organization established to improve learning for young Australians through world-class school curriculum,

assessment, and reporting. The Council of Australian Governments established the commitment to the Australian Curriculum, framed in terms defined by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training, and Youth Affairs in their 2008 Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians. Since 2011, coordinated efforts have contributed to gradually phasing in a new national curriculum for students attending schools within Australia. Since the national curriculum has been developed, it has been introduced into various states and territories according to the time line of various state Departments of Education. Before the national curriculum was developed, each state and territory developed its own curriculum for students. Subjects are still being created as part of this developmental process.

ACARA is committed to the development of a high-quality curriculum for all Australian students, one that promotes excellence and equity in education. It maintains that all students are entitled to rigorous, relevant, and engaging learning programs drawn from a challenging curriculum that addresses their individual learning needs. Teachers are expected to use the Australian Curriculum to develop teaching and learning programs that build on students' interests, strengths, goals, and learning needs, and address the cognitive, affective, physical, social, and aesthetic needs of all students from foundation to Year 12. However, it is evident from Australian research that teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and understanding of gifted and talented students' intellectual, social, and emotional needs and relevant teacher pedagogy for teaching gifted students varies greatly. Yet, this knowledge has been found to be effective with educational provision and programs when developed in response to appropriate teacher education and professional learning in gifted education (Kaman & Kronborg, 2012; Kronborg, Kelly, & Plunkett, 2010; Kronborg & Plunkett, 2012, 2013; Lassig, 2009; Pederson & Kronborg, 2014; Plunkett, 2002).

The relationship between three dimensions of the learning areas, general capabilities, and cross-curriculum priorities in the new Australian curriculum, provides teachers with flexibility to cater

for student diversity through personalized learning. Teachers can help meet individual learning needs by incorporating specific teaching of the general capabilities or cross-curriculum priorities through the learning area content (e.g., teaching targeted literacy skills through a history lesson, providing opportunities to explore sustainability in a science lesson, or scaffolding language specific to mathematics). The learning process suggested applies to all students, regardless of their circumstances, progress in learning, or the type or location of school they attend. The process aims to reinforce every student's entitlement to rigorous, relevant, and engaging learning experiences across all areas of the curriculum, and ensures that all students have similar opportunities and choices in their education. However, ACARA recommends that the diverse learning needs of students be met—including the needs of gifted students.

Within the innovative Australian Curriculum, gifted and talented students are described as students who have the right to "rigorous, relevant, and engaging learning activities drawn from a range of challenging curriculum that addresses their individual learning needs. Teachers can use the Australian Curriculum flexibly to meet the learning needs of gifted and talented students" (ACARA, 2015, p. 1). Yet, some teachers do this better than others, often depending on whether they have been exposed to professional learning or postgraduate studies in gifted education (Parliament of Victoria, 2012). Teachers are encouraged to

enrich student learning by providing students with opportunities to work with learning area content in more depth or breadth; emphasising specific aspects of the general capabilities learning continua (for example, the higher order cognitive skills of the Critical and creative thinking capability); and/or focusing on cross-curriculum priorities. Teachers can also accelerate student learning by drawing on content from later levels in the Australian Curriculum and/or from local state and territory teaching and learning materials. (ACARA, 2015, p. 21)

However, in Australia all states and territories have their own organized departments of education that coordinate and fund education in government-organized schools. In addition, the Catholic Education Office coordinates education in Catholic schools, and an independent school sector coordinates educational provisions for gifted and talented students through the Coordinator of Gifted Education. Furthermore, numerous independent schools across Australia provide the international baccalaureate, mainly in the final years of high schools, to interested students.

New Zealand

In 2011, The New Zealand Gifted and Talented Advisory Group revised their vision and core principles for “supporting the achievement and wellbeing of gifted and talented learners” (Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 9). The revised vision included recognizing the Treaty of Waitangi and its implications for ensuring gifted and talented educational provision, which reflected the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand. The New Zealand vision for gifted and talented learners was to recognize, value and empower them “to develop their exceptional abilities and qualities through equitable access to differentiated and culturally responsive provisions” (p. 10).

The core principles for supporting the achievement and wellbeing of their gifted and talented learners was explicitly stated in their Ministry of Education document that aimed to meet the needs of these students in the New Zealand schools. Their principles aimed to ensure that all schools were responsive, engaging, and inclusive to gifted and talented students’ needs. Core principles were created around key words: embedded, professional capability, Treaty of Waitangi, high expectations, learning to learn, inclusion, engagement, evidence, responsive, coherence, cultural diversity and future focus. Teachers in schools were also directed to coordinate their programming for gifted students in conjunction with four other key policies. These included the New Zealand Curriculum and the Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, which set the national frameworks for Curriculum design, The Ka Hikitia—Managing for Success which was the Maori Education Strategy 2008–2012, The

Pasifika Education Plan 2009–2012, which called on teachers to educationally provide for Pasifika students, and Success for All—Every School, Every Child, which aimed to achieve a fully inclusive education system.

Specific Gifted Policies

Policies across Australian states and New Zealand influence schools’ curriculum planning for their gifted students in different ways. In New Zealand, it is recommended that schools develop and implement school plans and procedures and classroom programs to support gifted and talented students most effectively by using a collaborative inquiry approach (Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 18). It is also acknowledged that professional learning and development for teachers is an essential aspect to develop effective programs for gifted and talented students (Riley & Moltzen, 2010). Whereas, in Australia, the state and territory departments of education influence school approaches to gifted education with their policies and guidelines that have been developed; these can vary with differing priorities.

South Australia. The South Australian policy statement for gifted and talented students maintains that

all gifted and talented learners need a rich learning environment that fosters wellbeing and learning outcomes consistent with their abilities. The learning environment needs to provide educational pathways and appropriately challenging enrichment, extension and acceleration experiences. Within the broad range of giftedness, different levels of intellectual potential and ability will require different types of educational provision. (South Australia Department for Education and Child Development [DECD], 2016, p. 4)

The substantial preexisting gifted policy was updated in 2012; however, according to Jarvis and Henderson (2012), “the revisions were not substantive or based on a broad process of consultation or evaluation, and the policy has never been mandated in schools” (p. 5). In South Australia

there are three designated specialist high schools that provide an accelerated academic program to selected students who enter at Year 8. There were coordinators for students with high intellectual potential, who were responsible for supporting DECD primary schools, but funding for these roles was discontinued around 2006 (Henderson & Jarvis, 2011). Schooling for gifted students is also provided by the South Australian Catholic Education Office, which updated its documents in 2006 to release a policy for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students, although individual schools in the independent sector tend to develop their own gifted policies and programs for students (Jarvis & Henderson, 2012).

In the policy statement from the South Australia DECD, which was updated again in 2016, it is acknowledged that most gifted and talented learners will be taught in mainstream classes in response to differentiated curriculum. It is recommended that curriculum provision include opportunities for enrichment, extension, and acceleration, and that enrichment include cluster grouping of likeminded peers, cocurricular programs, and community programs. For extension differentiated curriculum, compacted curriculum and teaching needs to consider development of higher order thinking, creative problem-solving and moral dilemmas.

It is recommended that identification of gifted and talented learners should take place as early as possible and at various times and regular intervals during the school years. The identification process needs to be reliable, defensible, and inclusive of diverse groups of students, hence comprehensive, multiple criteria needs to be considered, and valid and reliable assessment tools and strategies implemented (DECD, 2016).

New South Wales. The NSW Department of Education and Training produced two key documents in 2004 that strongly influenced gifted education: the *Policy and Implementation Strategies for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students* and the *Guidelines for the Use of Strategies to Support Gifted and Talented Students*. There are other key policies on acceleration and parent information

and support packages that have been developed to support the implementation of the revised policy. There is the *Gifted and Talented Education Professional Development Package for Teachers* (Gross et al., 2005), which is a computer based course on the education of gifted and talented students that was funded by the Australian government's Department of Education, Science, and Training and produced at the University of NSW, which is still a resource to many teachers in NSW and around Australia.

In 2015, the educational aim of the NSW government was to identify gifted and talented students to maximize their learning outcomes in all public schools. In NSW, there are various selective learning options for gifted students, especially at the secondary level. There are 17 fully selective high schools, 25 high schools with selective classes, a virtual selective stream (for students enrolled in government schools in rural and remote locations), and 4 agricultural high schools offering selective placement in Year 7.

Additionally, there is a senior high school, with selective classes offering entry to Years 11 and 12. Partially selective high schools have selective and community classes that fit each type of high school. Agricultural high schools have selective classes that emphasize the study of agriculture, with boarding sections giving priority to geographically isolated students. The virtual selective secondary school uses computer technologies to connect students in rural and remote schools to become part of a broader, networked learning community. Students are enrolled in their home school while participating in English, mathematics, and science through the virtual selective secondary school.

In NSW, the primary schools also have opportunity classes for high-achieving, academically gifted students in Years 5 and 6. There are 75 primary schools currently with these opportunity classes, although other states have chosen not to offer these high-ability opportunity classes. In most cases, gifted students who attend these classes have left another school to attend this type of 2-year program (NSW Department of Education, 2015).

There is also a distinction between educational provision and programs for gifted students recommended for teachers on the NSW Department of Education website (<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au>). The curriculum for gifted learners is guided by particular beliefs, such as the belief that the needs of gifted learners should encompass cognitive, affective, social, and aesthetic areas of curriculum experiences; the curriculum should incorporate accelerated and enriched learning; and the curriculum experiences should be planned thoughtfully, should be written, and should include explicit assessment (VanTassel-Baska, 2003).

Western Australia. In the state of Western Australia, the gifted policy drafted in 2010 emphasizes the Department of Education provide support for gifted and talented students to achieve their best possible outcomes. It also acknowledged that gifted and talented students are represented in all socioeconomic and cultural environments and that many students are at risk of not achieving their full potential (Western Australia Department of Education, 2010). The gifted policy was constructed to be implemented by principals, teachers, parents, peers, and the community. It emphasizes that principals would verify that teachers provided the necessary teaching and learning adjustments for students identified as gifted and talented to achieve optimal education outcomes. Teachers can provide a challenging extended curriculum in supplementary situations where gifted and talented students can interact with gifted and talented peers in specific curriculum areas on a part-time basis, and in selective schools, on a full-time basis. In Western Australia, there are two selective high schools—one with an academic focus and another with an arts-gifted focus.

There are also 17 selective academic secondary programs in mathematics, science, and humanities, where there are opportunities to compete in state, national and international competitions, university extension programs, and leadership and community service programs. Students complete an academic selective entrance test to participate in these academic secondary programs. Furthermore, there is an online selective academic program for secondary students in rural Western Australia, as

well as Primary Extension and Challenge programs for talented students in Years 5 and 6. These programs take place in various schools on a part-time basis (e.g., one morning or afternoon a week) when selected gifted students are withdrawn from regular classes to attend innovative courses in a range of learning areas. Additionally, there is an online program available for gifted primary students who are unable to attend face to face classes. These programs create opportunities for gifted students to socially interact with other gifted children, as well as to enjoy intellectually challenging curriculum and learn from practicing experts.

Identification processes in Western Australian schools are inclusive to ensure gifted and talented students are not disadvantaged on the basis of gender, racial, cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds, physical or sensory disability, or geographic location. Therefore, identification involves multiple processes, such as parent recommendation, IQ tests (verbal and nonverbal abilities), standardized achievement tests, school records, anecdotal records, identification checklists, and rating scales. Additionally, interpreters and translators are available to help assess students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Victoria. Victoria also has a strong focus on gifted education. In 2012 the Parliament of Victoria released a report from the Education and Training Committee that had established an *Inquiry Into the Education of Gifted and Talented Students* (Parliament of Victoria, 2012). There was a previous Australian Senate inquiry into gifted and talented children in 2001, but many of the recommendations were not acted on. One initial outcome that arose from the Victorian inquiry was the development of a Victorian Gifted and Talented Expert Committee to make recommendations to the Department of Education and Early Childhood, and in May 2014, a new strategy for gifted and talented children and young people, called *Aiming High*, was released with a plan of action ready to take place in 2014–2019. However, there has been a change of state government since the launch of the gifted education strategy, although the gifted and talented education focus appears to be

maintained by the restructured Department of Education and Training.

An educational aim of the Victorian Department of Education is to have all professionals contribute to mediating and scaffolding children's learning within mixed-ability classrooms. However, it has been acknowledged that if there is a lack of appropriate response for young gifted children, this will lead to problems for the children, their families, and educators. The emphasis for early childhood educators is to be aware of the characteristics that can be observed in young gifted children, including early language development, abstract thinking, strong memory, capacity to focus and concentrate on a task of interest, intellectual curiosity, and a strong motivation to learn. It is recommended that early identification of young gifted children take place in the interests of the child's long term well-being, and that teachers should recognize that giftedness is equally present in girls and boys and in children from all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

The estimates of the number of gifted and talented individuals are broader than Gagné's (2003, 2004) definition of giftedness and talent, with a focus on 10% to 15% of the population, yet there is an acknowledgement in the Victorian Department of Education that gifted children can also have learning difficulties and disabilities. Furthermore, it is recommended that gifted children develop their potential and capacities for high-level performance in particular areas or domains of learning, depending on their natural abilities and the environmental influences they experience and the support and encouragement they receive from early childhood professionals and their families (Parliament of Victoria, 2012).

There are also four select-entry high schools in Victoria for academically able students in Years 9 to 12: an all-girls school and an all-boys school in inner Melbourne, and two recently developed coeducational high schools, in the south-east and in the west of Melbourne. Additionally, there are 36 government secondary schools with select-entry accelerated learning programs where students experience compacted, extended, and enriched accelerated curriculum for most of their subjects in Years 7 through 10, completing 4 years of curriculum in 3 years (Kaman & Kronborg, 2012). There are also

two new science senior schools for academically able, science, and math oriented students in Years 10 through 12, which are associated with two of the leading universities, Monash University and University of Melbourne.

Additionally, there is an expectation that teachers will be able to provide for their gifted students in mixed-ability, differentiated classes, yet feedback from preservice teachers on their professional placement experiences tends to indicate this is not happening, except in exceptional circumstances. The Catholic Education Office also has a gifted education consultant who advocates for gifted students in schools in the Catholic sector and there is a strong independent school system that provides for highly able and gifted students in many of the schools.

Other Australian states and territories. Queensland, Tasmania, and the territories of Canberra and Northern Territory, also have developed gifted education policies. The Queensland Department of Education and Training provides general supporting information to teachers on identification of gifted and talented students emphasizing the use of multiple criteria so that students are not "educationally disadvantaged on the basis of racial, cultural or socio-economic background; physical or sensory disability; geographic location; or gender" (Queensland Department of Education and Training, 2017, p. 2). Queensland created a prep to Year 12 curriculum, with an assessment and reporting framework for teachers to follow, and a policy statement which focused on curriculum provision for gifted and talented students. This policy specifies teachers apply curriculum differentiation for gifted students, and acknowledges that some gifted students may require different year level curriculum than their age-matched peers. Teachers should be aware of these documents and to apply these policies in classes where they teach gifted and talented students.

Queensland also introduced three academies in 2007, which are selective entry high schools for academically able students in Years 10 through 12: the Queensland Academy for Science, Mathematics and Technology; the Queensland Academy for Creative

Industries; and the Queensland Academy for Health Sciences. All three academies offer the international baccalaureate diploma program and each program is linked with a university. A young scholars program was also created for gifted and talented students in Years 5 through 9 to promote partnership strategies with schools (Harreveld & Caldwell, 2010).

Student Diversity and Gifted Students

In all Australian states and territories there is an acknowledgement of diverse gifted students and the need to use multiple criteria when identifying them. The Australian Curriculum provides a definition of gifted students that applies to students across Australia.

Gifted and talented students vary in terms of the nature and level of their abilities; there is no single homogeneous group of gifted and talented students. Gifted and talented students

- vary in abilities and aptitudes—they may demonstrate gifts and talents in a single area or across a variety of domains or they may have a disability;
- vary in their level of giftedness—this means that two students who have gifts in the same field will not necessarily have the same abilities in that field;
- vary in achievement—although having gifts is often associated with high achievement, achievement can and does vary across high-potential students and over time, and some gifted students underachieve and experience difficulty translating their gifts into talents;
- are not always visible and easy to identify—visibility can be impacted by cultural and linguistic background, gender, language and learning difficulties, socioeconomic circumstance, location, and lack of engagement in curriculum that is not matched to their abilities;
- exhibit an almost unlimited range of personal characteristics in temperament, personality, motivation and behavior—no standard pattern of talent exists among gifted individuals; and
- come from diverse backgrounds and are found in all cultures, socioeconomic levels, and geographic locations. (ACARA, n.d.)

Diversity is acknowledged in the openness of the descriptors used for gifted students.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education clearly acknowledges the educational needs of gifted minority cultures with its Te Kete Ipurangi Gifted and Talented online website (<http://gifted.tki.org.nz>), supported by a facilitated mailing list. Culturally and linguistically diverse gifted students are often not identified by teachers in schools because teachers do not acknowledge that different cultures value different abilities in children and do not apply multicultural knowledge to inform their practice (Bevan-Brown, 2005). In the New Zealand Gifted and Talented Students guide (Ministry of Education, 2012), there are two appendices that acknowledge the need to recognize giftedness in Maori students and remind teachers to assess how well their school is providing for gifted students from minority backgrounds in regard to demographics, concept, identification, and provisions. A template with indicators and characteristics has been created as a guide for teachers to apply, with indicators of where teachers might observe these behaviors; although a document on exploring the components of a Maori concept of giftedness is also provided for teachers (Riley, Moltzen, & Dreaver, 2012).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is evident in the last two decades that there has been a sustained growth of knowledge and understanding of the diverse educational needs of gifted and talented students. An increasing number of teachers have become more conscious of supporting the intellectual, social, and emotional needs of their academically able students in our more competitive world. This has emerged largely from a small group of academics in universities in Australia and New Zealand who have conducted their research in the field of gifted education and talent development and shared their knowledge with their students at universities.

By academics responding to teachers', psychologists', and educational administrators' requests for professional learning in schools, there has been an expansion of the field of gifted educators at the state and national level. In addition, academics have

worked with ministries of education in Australia and New Zealand to raise the awareness of gifted and talented students' needs, and to create relevant policies with local departments of education. The development of these policies have varied in impact, yet these have had a significant influence on teachers' acknowledging the importance of gifted and talented students' educational needs in their care—at the early childhood level and within primary and secondary schools.

Within Australia and New Zealand the egalitarian mantra is that gifted education tends to be favored within an inclusive education framework, yet, the research indicates that much of our successful education with these students takes place in selective environments, especially at the secondary level (Kaman & Kronborg, 2012; Kronborg & Plunkett, 2012, 2013). It will be interesting to see what research questions guide our investigations of the educational needs of gifted and talented students in the coming decade, as educators revise their pedagogy, curriculum, knowledge, and understanding of what gifted and talented students need to realize their talent potential.

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