

Editorial

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It is with great delight that we present this issue of *APEX: The New Zealand Journal of Gifted Education*. After several years of abeyance, the journal has received renewed interest by academics and students in New Zealand and beyond. The last few years have been important ones in the development of gifted and talented education in our country, with unprecedented support and initiatives. Since our last edition in 2004, New Zealand has seen many changes in the field of gifted and talented education:

- From Term 1, 2005, it became mandatory for all schools in New Zealand to demonstrate how they are identifying and meeting the needs of gifted and talented students.
- In 2006, the Ministry of Education hosted over 700 educators, parents and other advocates of gifted and talented students at a national conference, *Rising Tides*.
- Between 2006 and 2008 twenty-one Talent Development Initiatives were funded by the Ministry of Education. Prior to that 3-year period, seventeen initiatives were funded (2003-2005).
- In 2008, the Ministry of Education released a publication for parents and teachers of gifted and talented students, *Nurturing Gifted and Talented Children – A Parent–Teacher Partnership*.
- In 2008, the Education Review Office released a report on provisions for gifted and talented students in New Zealand, *Schools' Provisions for Gifted and Talented Students*, and a second report highlighting best practices.

These significant developments only represent the work undertaken and supported by the Government – many other innovative and exciting initiatives have taken place in centres and schools throughout the country. The recent formation of a professional association for

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educators of gifted and talented students, giftEDnz, is just one example of the growing commitment and awareness.

When Joe Renzulli claimed, “A rising tide lifts all ships”, he was signalling the impact that the principles and practices of gifted and talented education could have upon all students. What we have seen in the last several years in New Zealand has been a rising tide of advocacy, tireless dedication and commitment, teaching and research which has led to many positive changes for our gifted and talented students.

During this wave of activity, New Zealand teachers and researchers have been able to shift the focus from the ‘basics’ of gifted and talented education to those students who may be gifted and talented but at risk of not achieving in our system. This issue of *APEX* highlights the latest thinking – theoretical, research-based, and practice-driven – in the education of these students of promise.

The first article, by Associate Professor Jill Bevan-Brown, builds upon her earlier writings by sharing practical information and strategies to help teachers identify and provide for gifted and talented Māori students in culturally appropriate and responsive ways. Her article clearly connects concepts, identification and provisions by examining them from different cultural lenses.

The article by Professor Theresa Monaco and her graduate students in Texas provides case studies of at-risk gifted and talented students and how their regular classroom teachers worked to identify and meet their needs. The teachers’ perspectives provide a rich account of the struggles and joys of working with gifted and talented students who may have disabilities, speak English as an additional language or present with other unique differences.

The next article by Kylee Edwards, a University of Waikato teaching fellow and doctoral candidate, explores the misdiagnosis of the gifted as ADHD. The article contrasts the diagnostic criteria for ADHD, giftedness and creativity, highlighting the parallels and disjunctures amongst them. The implications for teachers include the need for ongoing professional development.

The article by Lynette Radue, a postgraduate student at Massey University, details her professional development journey and its

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impact upon her understandings and practice in teaching young gifted and talented children. As the initiatives listed at the beginning of this editorial show, gifted and talented children in the early childhood sector have not received national attention and support (to the extent of their primary and secondary-aged compatriots). Lynette's experiences will encourage and hopefully validate the experiences of early childhood teachers.

One of our world's mathematical geniuses, Albert Einstein, would not have been identified as gifted by those who knew him as a young boy. In fact, as the article by Massey University postgraduate student Donna Beeston shows, Einstein showed some evidence of being an underachiever throughout his education. The article examines the factors that may have influenced his underachievement, many of which are still relevant today.

The final article examines one possible solution for schools searching for an effective means to meet the needs of their gifted and talented students – cluster grouping. Massey University extramural undergraduate student, Megan Biddick, describes the literature around this approach and provides some practical examples. This is a simple, elegant solution – but will only be effective if teachers differentiate for their gifted and talented students who are cluster grouped.

This issue also includes journal recommendations for schools. These are recommended by the 2009 students enrolled in a postgraduate paper at Massey University. The journals suggested are by no means an exhaustive list, but they are those that students felt would be relevant and useful for New Zealand schools.

As you can see, this is an issue that is filled with many interesting, thought-provoking ideas for our readers. We would like to thank the contributing authors, and also our editorial board for their diligence in reviewing the articles and providing feedback to the authors. The editorial board has also been rejuvenated, with some new members joining us – we warmly welcome you all, both old and new! Our editorial board members are:

- Assoc. Prof. Jill Bevan-Brown, Massey University
- Rosemary Cathcart, REACH Education

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- Assoc. Prof. Deborah Fraser, University of Waikato
- Jenny Horsley, Victoria University
- Dr. Valerie Margrain, Massey University
- Bill MacIntyre, Massey University
- Dr. Sally Peters, University of Waikato
- Dr. Catherine Rawlinson, University of Auckland
- Jenny Smith, Canterbury University
- Prof. Michael Townsend, Massey University

We would like to express our thanks to the executive committee of the New Zealand Association for Gifted Children for their patience and support as we breathed new life into the journal. With such a strong team, we are confident that the aim of the journal, to disseminate essays research reports and critical comment in the broad field of the education of gifted and talented children, will be met. It has now been over 20 years since *APEX* was established by David Walter Freeman and we are hopeful that his vision will continue to be fulfilled.

Finally, we hope to have a special issue of *APEX* by the end of 2009 which focuses on the Talent Development Initiatives. We invite our readers who have had involvement in any of the Talent Development Initiatives to consider submitting a publication for review. We would like to invite you to contribute an article for this special issue. Given the gifted and talented review and change of Government priorities in education, we think it is vitally important (and timely) to share your stories.

Your article could be any of the following:

- A descriptive report of your initiative
- A case study of a student, teacher, parent , or other stakeholder involved in your initiative
- An evaluation of your initiative
- Report on research undertaken about your initiative (e.g., postgraduate student research)
- A theory to practice explanation or discussion of one aspect of your initiative (e.g., identification, differentiation strategies, professional development)

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But please dont feel limited to this list! Let your creative juices flow! APEX articles are generally 3,000-5,000 words in length, written in APA style. Guidelines are available on our website (www.giftedchildren.org.nz/apex/). All articles are reviewed by a member of our editorial board prior to publication, often with suggestions made for improving or enhancing the final article.

We would like to have articles by **1 August 2009**. Please contact us if you have any questions or suggestions for this or other issues of the journal.