

Dear Ms Lisa Paul and members of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review,

I am writing to you as a parent of two gifted children. I am also a dedicated teacher with a passion for working with gifted students.

Many different government enquiries have considered gifted education and reported on the need for initial teacher education to include a compulsory unit on gifted education. Some of these include:

Report by the Senate Select Committee on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children 1988,

Senate Inquiry into the Education of the Gifted and Talented 2001, amongst its hearings found:

“The main theme that emerged in the inquiry is the need for better teacher training (both preservice and inservice) so that teachers are better able to identify the gifted and make provision for their special needs. Better curriculum support is also essential so that teachers can differentiate the curriculum for the gifted.”

Productivity Commission Research Report, Schools Workforce, April 2012, which reported:

“...it is also important to recognise the learning needs of gifted and talented students who have the potential to excel beyond the achievements of an average student.” (p268)

Despite all these inquiries, reports, and findings there is still no inclusion of a compulsory unit on gifted education included in initial teacher training.

This issue is of personal interest to me because I have seen so many poor approaches... both from the perspective of a parent and also working within various schools. I completed and participated in various courses myself eg. Geric modules as my interest was growing. I completed my Masters (20 years after my undergraduate course, which included the Gifted Education subject. I believe wholeheartedly that this should have formed a component of my initial training. In particular, the needs of twice exceptional students are not always recognised or catered for. The inherent misunderstanding that gifted students are 100% compliant and still is of concern.

Quality teaching, and thus a quality education for gifted students is primarily met by teachers in mainstream classrooms. It is essential for teachers during initial teacher training to develop an understanding of the needs of gifted students and the appropriate pedagogies and identification processes so that can provide a rigorous, engaging learning experience when they start classroom teaching.

I urge you to make a unit of study in gifted education compulsory in all initial teaching programs across Australia.

Yours in anticipation,