

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

I am writing to you as a parent of a gifted child.

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 pre-service and in-service) 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.”

“That state and territory education authorities should require, as a condition of employment, that newly graduated teachers have at least a semester unit on the special needs of gifted children in their degrees. This should include training in identification of gifted children and the pedagogy of teaching them.”
Recommendation 14.

- 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. The AITSL teaching standards do not include gifted students anywhere. They are a missing piece of the classroom puzzle.

This issue is of personal interest to me because my daughter born on February 1st; as parents we knew she was on the smart end for her age and wished to get her into school early. Researched ourselves, found out about Early Entry, approached our local government school, and asked for support with an application. Principal had advised it was quite hard to get in (we understood this but wanted the psych test to confirm entry) and that her own children had Early Entry themselves. Psych test came through and had a high IQ which placed her into the Gifted & Talented range. As parents - what did this mean.

Our school had never had an identified gifted student enrolled before; nor had any of the teachers had an identified gifted student within their teaching years. I feel to a degree my local school were not prepared for how fast my daughter was going to learn things. I still, now 1 year and a half into schooling, do not believe the school is supporting my daughter to the length that she is needing. Quoting from a support teacher regarding the Gifted Online courses that DoE provide “I usually get her, *my daughter*, when I have time”. That is not acceptable.

The classroom teacher should be using Gifted Online as extension work for when my daughter has either completed the work required, or already knows the work required.

Now; my daughter was enrolled in 2020 as her first year of school; however we had my step daughter enrolled at the same school. In her Grade 3 NAPLAN her score was recognised as Top of The School. Grade 3 and receiving Top of the School, meant she was successful enough to do better than the Grade 5's that sat the test in the same year.

Now, if the teachers at the school had Gifted & Talented education; I believe Giftedness would have been picked up in my stepdaughter (two years prior to us finding out about my daughter being Gifted, through Early Entry process).

Now as my stepdaughter is entering High School, we are going through a private psych to get her formally tested aiming for that to assist her learning requirements throughout the years of Highschool.

If **all** teachers had formal education, during their teaching degrees then I honestly believe all children will benefit from it.

For those teachers who are already qualified, they could sit a mini COGE / advanced course through UNSW / GERRIC.

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 in 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 faithfully,

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