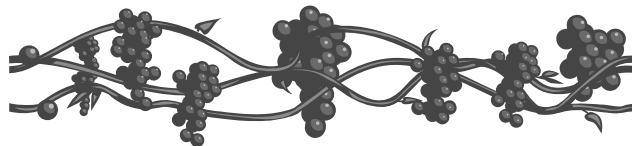




GATCA WA

The Gifted & Talented Children's Association of WA (Inc)

The Grapevine



GATCA

PO Box 1177

West Leederville, WA 6901

info@gatcawa.org www.gatcawa.org

GATCA HELPLINE – 94870122

The Grapevine September 2005

Committee Members

President

John Bailey
Ph: 93686466
jrbailey@it.net.au

Vice President

Clare Magee
magee.clare@cathednet.wa.edu.au

Treasurer

Michelle Clayton
clayton.michelle@cathednet.wa.edu.au

Secretary

Sue Moran
Darcy01@iprimus.com.au

Membership Secretary

Kriss Muskett
musket@iinet.com.au

AAEGT Rep

Derrin Cramer
derrin@thinkingahead.com.au

Early Learners Group

Nancy Miles-Tweedie
anm-t@it.net.au

Committee Members

Michael Loh
myml@optusnet.net.au

Peter Lewis
plewis@ccqs.wa.edu.au

Pam Quartermass
Pam.holt@posmc.com.au

Denise Brown
peekaydesign@bigpond.com

Contents

Presidents Report	1
Parenting Gifted Preschoolers	2
Home schooling and Obesity	6
Coming Events	8
Independent Learning Strategies	9
Library Update	10
The Gifted Puzzle DVD Review	11
AAEGT Report	12
Future Problem Solving success	13
Gifted and Talented PD in CEO	14
Parent contribution	15
Rural Parent workshops	17
Membership form	18

Publication deadlines **December Newsletter**

Advertising and articles must be received
no later than
NOVEMBER 22
for inclusion

Advertising Rates

Current rates for advertising are as follows:
Full page \$100
Half page \$50
Quarter page (wide or tall) \$25

All advertising must be received by the
publication deadline.

*You are invited to send your experiences,
children's stories, work samples or anything else
that you want to see in the Grapevine to
derrin@thinkingahead.com.au for consideration.*

President's Report

Welcome to the "almost the end of the year" report.... Time is flying, and by the time you read this you'll only have a couple of months to get active with your planning about next year's schooling and to have an input to the last of GATCA activities for 2005.

Since the Annual General Meeting held in early June, the new committee has met a couple of times and sub-groups have had some "working party" meetings. I am really pleased to be working with such an excellent committee – a great blend of people who have been in GATCA for a while, and those who are new to the Association. At these meetings we have been dealing with several major issues.

We have spent quite a bit of time developing a new constitution, which is current and more accurately reflects the activities of the Association. No major changes are being suggested, but it is being tidied up, and the membership will be invited to review and ratify in due course. It is still very much in draft form, and if anyone would like an input, please do contact a committee member.

We are also in the process of reviewing our website, and again, invite any of our members to assist in working through the pages, identifying sections which are out of date, or links that are not longer viable. We would love to hear suggestions from anyone who would like to see new sections included too.

It is our intention to hold more events and social activities for the children combined with information sessions and discussion groups for the adults. These will co-exist with our regular information sessions which occur on the first Wednesday evening of each month. If you have any suggestions about the sorts of activities you would like to see, email them to a committee member. If you have the contacts or energy, and would like to help us in organising a particular event, please do let us know.

Although there are many people deserving of special mention, I would like to give special thanks to two. Kriss Muskett has been almost single-handedly producing the "GATCA Grapevine" for a couple of years, and has at last been forced (by the need for some time to pursue other important things in her life) to step down from this role. We thank you Kriss, for the superb work you have done in this area of GATCA's life. It has been an immense undertaking, given that you already contribute so much to GATCA in so many other ways.

I would also like to thank Nancye Miles-Tweedie for all her work with the "Early Learners" group. We introduced the group some ten years ago, but it has really grown since Nancye took an interest in it and began organising events. Parents with their young children meet regularly for a play and a chat (and the kids enjoy themselves too). Nancye and the Early Learners Group provide a wonderful source of information and support to many of our members and we thank her very much.

The library is growing (many thanks Michael for your special interest in that area), we have guest speakers (Thinking Ahead is very active in supporting that area of our life), Michael and Kriss have taken on a regular role in organising Fiona Smith to visit Perth to assess many GATCA children each year, and we continue to support our members with a range of other activities and services too. Please let us know what else we can do, and remember, if you would like an input, please do contact a committee member, find out when the next meeting is, and come along, or send us your suggestions.

Good luck for the rest of the year.

Regards
John Bailey

Home Schooling and Obesity

Janelle MacDonald is a Past President of GATCA WA now living in NSW where she home-schools her two daughters

This week, on one of the very rare occasions that I managed to watch the news, there was an article on childhood obesity. From memory 23% of Australian children and adolescents are overweight and about 6% are obese. About 20% of our children have health problems related to their weight.

That's a lot of children. If that is the case you can expect to see about 6 kids in each class who are overweight. There are major campaigns happening across Australia to help cut the rates of obesity. Teaching children nutrition, teaching parents nutrition, changing what is served in canteens, getting children active, encouraging sports – they are all there.

I have a plan to cut the national childhood obesity rate. Sure it's radical, and I very much doubt the government will go along with it, but it makes perfect sense to me.

There are about 70 children attend our local home schooling activities during the year – some regularly, some only occasionally. Out of those 70 there is one family of 2 whom I would say to be very slightly overweight, and no children to fall into the obese range. Interesting, I thought.

I took my theory further the other day and asked a home schooling friend in another area how many overweight home schooling children she has met – her answer? “None in either of the districts we have home schooled in”. Another

friend, home schooling for 5 years, came up with the same answer.

So why are home schooled children not overweight?

We look after my nephew fairly regularly and use a certain fast food outlet with a playground as a drop off point (rarely an eating point!). Every morning we are there the number of children having breakfast and doing homework astounds me. These children are wearing school uniform, many of them from the more prestigious school in the area. A drive past many of the suburban high schools at lunchtime, and after school, usually means dodging school students as they make their migration across the road to the fast food outlet to eat and socialize.

There may be home schoolers who go to these places on a daily basis, but if there are I'm yet to find them. In fact for those I know it's more of a special treat on the odd occasion.

Food at school in general is a concern. Children's lunch boxes bulge with the latest in 'healthy junk food'. All designed to attract the children's attention, and the mother's guilt if they do not buy them. I was always one of those mothers who did not buy these things, and my children paid for it in subtle, and not so subtle ways.

Then there is the canteen. Although regulations are changing so that canteen food has to be 'healthy' it still has a lot to answer for. Home schooled children are

“A drive past many suburban high schoolsusually means dodging school students as they cross the road to the fast food outlet to eat and socialise”

not under the peer pressure to have a certain food in their lunch box, or to buy things from the canteen.

As home schooled children my girls eat good nutritious food every day – not because I'm a health nut (in fact I'm the junk food addict), but because they can make their own snacks and meals during the day. Their choices are basic, non-fatty or sugary foods, as we do not have other things in the cupboard. They get home cooked evening meals, even if they are pre cooked and frozen. We take picnics most times we go out, because I cannot afford to feed them take away. Those home schoolers that I have discussed meals with are the same.



Then comes the concern that home schoolers do not have compulsory sport or as much movement in their day. I do not schedule sport for my children, and I know many other families who do not, because movement is such a big part of the children's lives. These children will play soccer, chases or some other physical activity as soon as there is a small group together. They are often sent

outside to run around or go on the trampoline before doing anymore work. Their afternoons and weekends are spent, not watching television, playing on the computer, or doing homework, but doing all those things that kids did years ago.

Of course there are children at school who are not overweight, who eat healthy foods and who run and play outside. I know they are there because at one stage my children were part of that group. I know there are probably overweight children who are home schooled.

My theory is one of no substance or no research but I think it's a good one. I wonder if the government will pay to do a study on the link between home schooled children and weight? Somehow I doubt it.

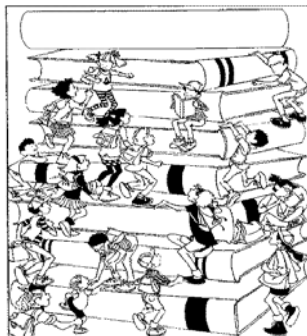
As always I'd love your feedback on this. You can email me on info@encouragelearning.com.au

Janelle MacDonald

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Coming Events

Information Nights

These events are free to members and are held at Meerilinga 115 Cambridge St Leederville at 7.30 on the 1st Wednesday of each month. Discussion and coffee follows the information session.

October 5

Wayne Revitt AISWA – Future Directions

Dr Peter Lewis - Advocating for your gifted child - working with rather than on schools

November 2

The Gifted Puzzle DVD. Viewing and discussions facilitated by Derrin Cramer

December 7

Felicity Naylor – Psych assessments



Family Activity Night

11 November 7.00 – 9.00pm
Meerilinga 115 Cambridge St
Leederville.



It is hoped that we can hold several

Family Picnic days next term.

Use your imagination and creative skills to design and build your own Amusement Park. Using recyclables you will develop a model of the ideal amusement park. Children will all take home their own model.

Helen Dudeney will lead this activity night for us. Come along with your family.



Cost is \$10 per child participating. Parents are welcome to join in or to make the most of the chance to talk with other families about life with gifted children over a coffee. Please register to assist with planning.

Early Learners Group
at 12 Ken St Wembley Downs.

Wednesday 14 September
Wednesday 12 October
Wednesday 16 November

Please contact Nancye on 93418036 or 0410851106 for more information



We are currently finalising insurance details. Please check the GATCA website for more information and details of locations etc closer to the date.

Proposed dates (to be confirmed)

- Oct 22
- December 3

Assessment opportunities

Visual Spatial assessments

with Helen Dudeney

Helen is available to conduct a limited number of Visual Spatial Assessments while she is here. Parents who are interested in this type of assessment which will give practical information of use at home and at school should contact Derrin Cramer 9474 4594 for further details and bookings.

Psych Assessments

Fiona Smith will be returning to Perth in December. Please contact Kriss Muskett on 9385-7962 to discuss testing for your child.



221 Scarborough Bch Rd
 Mt Hawthorn
 Wednesday to Friday
 10 to 4pm
 Saturday
 10 to 12.30 pm

Library Update

Interested in developing your ideas about acceleration?

The GATCA library has received 5 copies of
 "A Nation Deceived - Vol 1 and 2"

The Templeton report addresses the current situation by tackling the misconceptions about acceleration and dispelling their impact through research, examples of effective practice, and real-life stories.

Much of the format is as follows:

Point	Counterpoint
The school doesn't think the child is ready to be accelerated. Safe is better than sorry.	Doing nothing is not the same as "do no harm"
We have several smart students – how do we know that this child is different?	Tools and instruments are available to help determine which students will better benefit from acceleration. Closing our eyes to children's educational differences is neither democratic nor helpful
There's absolutely no proof that moving students ahead will help them academically or socially	Evidence indicates that when children's academic and social needs are not met, the result is boredom and disengagement from school.

These books are now available for borrowing from the GATCA library.

Did you know??????????

Earth is slowing down - in a few million years there won't be a leap year.

Summer on Uranus lasts for 21 years - but so does winter.

The Sahara desert expands at about 1km per month.

Oceanography, the study of oceans, is a mixture of biology, physics, geology and chemistry.

The one place where a flag flies all day, never goes up or comes down, and does not get saluted, is the moon.

Earth is not round; it is slightly pear-shaped. The North Pole radius is 44mm longer than the South Pole radius.

The Dead Sea is 365 m (1,200 ft) below sea level.

A storm officially becomes a hurricane when cyclone winds reach 119 km/h (74 mph).

<http://www.didyounow.cd/fastfacts/earth.htm>



Macquarie Bank Future Problem Solving Success

Western Australia has had unprecedented success this year in the Macquarie Bank Future Problem Solving program. For the first time there will be thirteen teams traveling to Sydney to compete in the National Competition at the Loreto Normanhurst College on October 15.

The Macquarie Bank Future Problem Solving program uses Paul Torrance's six step creative Problem Solving approach to look at Futuristic scenarios which deal with vital issues for our world. This is a rigorous process which assists all the students to thinking flexibly and creatively as well as interact with other likeminded people.

Depletion of Oceanic Species is the topic to be researched by the teams.

Competitive Booklet Division Results:

Junior Division:

John Calvin School Albany Coach: Brian Bosch
Ardross Primary School Coach: Auriol Heary coach
Iona Primary School: Two teams: Coaches: Patricia Saultry and John Bailey

Middle Division

John Calvin School Albany Coach: Brian Bosch
St Mary's College Coach: Annette Pedersen/John Bailey
Wesley College Two teams Coach: Lesley Sutherland
St Hilda's Girls' College Coach: Zita Lohr
Penrhos College Two teams Coach: John Bailey

Senior Division: Wesley College Coach: Lesley Sutherland

Community Problem Solving Results:

Junior Division: Kensington Primary School Coach: Carl Sanderson/John Bailey

Macquarie Bank Future Problem Solving is an excellent program for gifted students. Teachers who are interested in running Macquarie Bank Future Problem Solving in their school in 2006 are invited to contact Lesley Sutherland on 9368 8023 for more information.

Did you know?????????

There are 6,000 species of reptiles, 73,000 kinds of spiders, and 3,000 types of lice. For each person there is about 200 million insects.

Some facts about animals.....

African elephants only have four teeth to chew their food with.

There are about one billion cattle in the world of which 200 million are in India.

A house fly lives only 14 days.

A dog was the first in space and a sheep, a duck and a rooster the first to fly in a hot air balloon.

The oldest breed of dog is the Saluki.

The bee hummingbird of Cuba is the smallest bird in the world.

An ostrich can run up to 70 km/h (43mph).

<http://www.didyouknow.cd/>



AAEGT Report

As a member of GATCA you are also automatically a member of the AAEGT. AAEGT is the peak national body for gifted education and is active nationally in working to have the needs of gifted students served in the best possible way.

As WA has 2 affiliated associations, the executive position is shared between GATCA and ProAPT on a rotational basis with GATCA currently represented until 2007 by Derrin Cramer.

The AAEGT executive met in July at their AGM in Wollongong where Judith Hewton was announced as the new President. A very productive weekend of meetings resulted in a number of products that are nearing the publication stage. A "State of the Nation" snapshot has been compiled that will include information on the extent of provisions available in each state. A brochure to assist parents in advocating for their children was prepared and current policy was refined. The Gifted Puzzle DVD has been reviewed and copies distributed to Universities and Education Sectors around Australia.

AAEGT continues to be proactive in the area of advocacy at a national level with meetings between executive members and various Parliamentarians scheduled in the near future to keep the needs of the gifted as close to the national agenda as can be achieved.

The big news for WA however centres on the preparations for AAEGT's National Conference which will be held at the **Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle on September 27, 28 and 29 2006**. The theme for the Conference which will include sessions for parents, teachers and researchers is **Gifted: Concepts, Challenges, Realities**. Preparations are underway, and more information will be available very soon. The website and logo will be launched in the next few weeks followed by a call for papers. This is an exciting opportunity for WA and will bring international as well as interstate experts to WA to share their knowledge with us. Watch for more information in following newsletters.

Derrin Cramer

GATCA is pleased to be able to assist its members to access the services of a psychologist with expertise in testing and the social/ emotional and educational needs of the gifted. Cost of testing is comparable to testing in Perth

Visiting Consultant Psychologist

Fiona Smith BA. Hons (Psych) M.Ed. (Gifted Education)

specialising in working with gifted children and adolescents

Fiona has 6 years experience at the Gifted Education Research Resource Information Centre at UNSW as Principal Psychologist

Testing – Fiona uses the Stanford Binet Version 5 (SB5) the latest Binet instrument for measuring intellectual ability and has expertise in assessing highly gifted children. She is aware of the intensities and sensitivities that often accompany giftedness and has learned how important it is to gain a strong rapport with the child during assessment. Using a combination of the SB5 and the SBLM Fiona constructs a detailed profile of strengths and relative weaknesses which suitable for children who have previously been tested on another instrument and for those who have not previously tested.

Counselling – individual and small group counselling sessions will also be available.

For details contact Kriss Muskett on 9385 7962 or 0402 090 621

Gifted and Talented Professional Development for CEO teachers and psychologists.

The Catholic Education Office (WA) used Quality Teacher Programme funding to bring two University of New South Wales Gifted and Talented Education specialists, Professor Miraca Gross and Bronwyn MacLeod, to Perth recently. Seventy two Catholic school teachers, psychologists and principals were lucky enough to attend this training.

The course was generally based on the modules that were included in the Professional Development Package given to each person attending. These modules included:

- ✓ Understanding Giftedness
- ✓ The Identification of Gifted Students
- ✓ The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Students
- ✓ Understanding Underachievement in Gifted Students
- ✓ Curriculum Differentiation for gifted Students, and
- ✓ Developing Programmes and Provisions for Gifted Students

Over four days, CEO staff had many of their ideas and pedagogies challenged by the wisdom and knowledge of Miraca and Bronwyn.

To help participants to better understand giftedness, and to develop ways to deliver a differentiated curriculum, Miraca and Bronwyn provided a wealth of theoretical understandings and practical suggestions.

It was easy to find something you could immediately apply.

Several positive outcomes have been already been implemented as a direct result of this course: an extensive network of course participants has evolved; several fantastic programmes were shared amongst some of our teachers; and some schools have also begun professional development, using the course modules provided.

The need for this type of PD was evident. The course was full several weeks prior to commencing! It was obvious that Miraca and Bronwyn were moved by the contributions of all of those present, it was clear they would be delighted to return. So, we could expect an even longer waiting list next time!

I am sure all of those lucky enough to be present are now convinced that our gifted and talented children need better educational provision within our schools and that we can facilitate this change.

Clare Magee
Holy Spirit School
City Beach

Network Meeting
AISWA / CEO Network
meeting for teachers interested
in gifted education will be held
at PLC on October 26. Please
contact Wayne Revitt at
AISWA for more details on
9244-2788.

The following contribution was penned by a psychologist attending the CEO Gifted and Talented PD recently about her son.

*I have a son called Max
A very lively, little chap
Constantly talking, never sits still
Survives at school on a Ritalin pill.*

*The Year 2 teacher received a surprise
The music screening test opened her eyes
How could the naughtiest child in the class
Receive results unsurpassed
By all the others in the year
Goodness me, what have we here?*

*Year 4 comes, another event
Max sat still while he was sent
To PEAC testing at the school
Being in PEAC would be cool
Teacher predicts Max won't go well*

*He's hyperactive, can't read, can't spell
But lo and behold, he's one of the best
(There's little reading in the test)*

*He is gifted, doing well
Self esteem shining, (but still can't spell).*

Presently in Year 5, just done a course in electronics at PEAC, received a music scholarship and just made \$150 busking for an hour at Fremantle on Saturday!

Spelling skills still at a Year 2 level!

Federal Funding for Gifted Education

The allocation of \$3.2m for gifted education this year has meant that teachers in WA have had opportunities to access quality training. Additional money is now available and will be spent in each sector as they determine best meets the needs of their teachers.

A part of the funding was allocated to a series of Parent Workshops in regional areas. WA has been secured 9 workshops to be conducted between now and September 2006. More information appears elsewhere in the newsletter and dates will be posted on the website when they are available. City parents are welcome to attend these workshops in rural centres.

For more details please see the media release later in this newsletter.

Independent Learning Strategies

An overview of the way independent learning strategies can be introduced into a school's educational strategies

INDEPENDENT LEARNING STRATEGIES facilitate parts of a differentiated curriculum.. Emphasis is placed on student negotiation and modification of tasks, and on students pursuing these tasks with greater independence.

This can be achieved by preparing in advance options for the students to select as part of a unit's work (with options set at variable levels, involving different skills and appealing to different learning styles), encouraging students to choose the option they felt was most relevant - with this involving teacher input to facilitate student awareness of the match between the options and the student's talents and needs, encouraging students to suggest and pursue variations to the suggested options if they can present them as viable options to the teacher, encouraging students to work in groups if appropriate to the task (and, where this is done, encouraging cooperative group skills), encouraging students to seek out appropriate resources independently, and encouraging students to seek out and utilise working environments conducive to the task (for example, the "recital performance" based task involved moving outside and the analytic discussion based option involved moving to another room or an "independent learning centre" - see below).

Independent learning strategies can be utilised with appropriate students in primary or elementary schools as well as those in high schools. Fostering students' independence in shaping their learning

empowers them and increases the motivation and enthusiasm they bring to the process and to individual tasks. They become engaged in and responsible for their own education and this flows through to the way they view life as a whole.

Independent Learning Centres

An "independent learning centre" is a flexible space with appropriate resources where students can pursue independent projects or learning. Key elements of an "independent learning centre" (ILC) are a space for one or more groups or individuals to work in relative harmony (at higher discussion/noise levels than a library), suitable furnishings and resources (tables, computers, sound equipment, lock-away spaces, etc) to encourage flexible and relatively spontaneous use, a coordinator to handle ILC "bookings" and overall management, a teacher roster (perhaps at half teacher loading, supplemented by appropriate parent volunteers) to allow for necessary supervision and, where appropriate, assistance - the coordinator may try to link students using the ILC with ILC rostered teachers and parents with appropriate skills (particularly with interdisciplinary projects), and an understanding amongst the teaching staff that the ILC is there as a resource area for individuals or groups to flow into - this may develop over time.

Independent Learning Centres and other independent learning strategies can be utilised in primary as well as high schools.

References

© David Farmer 31 January 1996 - This piece was adapted from text I wrote for an educational video/booklet package [Meeting the Needs of Gifted Students in the Regular Classroom](#)

This article can be accessed at <http://www.austega.com/gifted/provisions/independlearning.htm>