



Working Together for the Gifted Newsletter

January 2009

Volume 1, Number 1

In This Issue

- Instant fun - Holiday Ideas
- School Holiday Programs
- Social Skills
- Intra-personal skills –
Managing Stress
- Book Review

Diary Dates

Jan 15, 16, 22,23 Holiday Programs

Jan 19 Social Skills Course

February 26 –Seminar Underachievement
and Visual Spatial Learners
(www.learninglinks.org.au)

March 13-15 NZ Reaching Forward Gifted
Conference (reachingforward@confer.co.nz)

April 2 Francois Gagne Seminar

April 21-24 Graduate Certificate – Gifted
Education - Murdoch University
(<http://www.murdoch.edu.au/>)

May 1 – 3 Illoura Residential G & T
Workshop - Canberra (www.nswagtc.org.au)

Services

www.australiangiftedsupport.com

The Australian Gifted Support
Centre offers a wide range of
services to gifted children, their
parents or caregivers and their
teachers

- We specialise in
- Gifted students

Welcome to our first e-newsletter for 2009. We hope you have all had an enjoyable relaxing Festive Season and are looking forward to an interesting, rewarding 2009. We plan to send regular e-newsletters this year and will have some regular segments. These will include

Instant Fun – simple ideas that don't cost a lot and can be both fun and challenging for your children.

Details about programs and events, both ones we are running and others offered within the community.

Book Reviews – information about different book resources we have found useful

Articles – short information pieces that might be of interest

Instant Fun - Holiday Ideas

As the summer holidays progress and many families travel it is great to have some simple activities that can be done in the car, on a plane or at a restaurant. Here are a few. Many of these games are open ended so it helps with the risk taking so important for otherwise perfectionistic players who always want right or wrong answers. *Remember – if we allow time to think the quality of all answers increases, this is especially important for the reflective thinkers, introverts or visual spatial thinkers in your family..*

ALPHABET.

Choose a category say Fruit & Vegetables, Places, First Names. Each person takes turns naming an item from that category starting with the letters of the Alphabet, in order. Eg apple, banana, cantaloupe ... Once this gets too easy, then each person must name something starting with the last letter of the previous persons answer eg, Anne, Elizabeth, Harry etc. This version can be fun and stretches the memory as you will find that many Anglo first names end in a, e, h and n so it becomes a challenge to find new ones to add. A great chance to use old fashioned names, names from other cultures or names from literature or fantasy books. This has the added benefit of increasing your child's repertoire of names that could later be used in their imaginative play or creative story writing.

- Visual Spatial Learners
- Twice Exceptional Learners
- *by providing the following services*
- Information for parents
- Information for teachers
- Identification of specific learning needs
- Counselling for Parents
- Counselling for Children
- Advocacy and liaison with schools
- Professional Development & training programs for
 - Teachers
 - Early Childhood workers
 - Parents
- Children's Workshop
 - Stepping Stones - Social Skills
 - Enrichment programs in school
 - School holiday program

WORD AT A TIME

In pairs tell a story but each person can only say one word at a time. The pair can either work co-operatively to develop the story or try to change the direction of the story to make it tricky for the other person.

CODED MESSAGES

This is a great one for restaurants and aeroplanes. Make up a code cipher and then write messages to you child who can then decode it and then write a coded message back for you to decode. Basic writing and spelling skills are needed. Some simple ciphers include reverse alphabet ie a =z b = y c = x. Secret word – write out the normal alphabet on one line underneath start by writing the secret word (it must not have any letters used twice) Then the rest of the alphabet in order. Eg.

A b c d e f g h i j k

H o l i d a y b c e f

For older children you could have them try to work out the cipher themselves.

MEMORY

One person chooses a person or an object(a chair, a cluttered desk) and both of you look hard at it for a short time. Then close your eyes or face in the other direction and take turns telling everything you can remember about the choses person or scene. This game improves visual perception. This could be played by more that two people and you will find that you improve the more you play it This idea comes from *Playing Smart* by Susan K. Perry, 1990.

School Holiday workshops

For children with bright enquiring minds who will be in Kindergarten to Year Six in 2009.

The goal of these workshops is to encourage the children to explore ideas and challenge themselves by *"thinking outside the square"*

developing friendships

thinking strategies,

trying new things

brainstorming,

experimentation and sharing

taking intellectual and creative risks

developing ideas through discussion,

sharing and working with other like minded souls

The following courses still have vacancies

LINDFIELD

THURSDAY 15th Januray
SPACE CHEMISTRY K-2

PEAKHURST

THURSDAY 22ND January
THE MAGIC OF RAINBOWS K-2

To down load full details and registration click [FLYER](#)

MEDIEVAL K-2
MATHS DETECTIVES 2-3
QUAKE 'N SHAKE Y3 – 5

FRIDAY 16th January
EARTH SCIENCE K –2
ONCE UPON A TIME K – 3
ROALD DAHL MANIA Y3 – 5
PHYSICS OF FLIGHT Y2 – 5
ANCIENT EGYPT Y3 - 6

SCIENCE MAGIC Y2 - 5
PHYSICS OF FLIGHT Y2 - 5
NOTES & NODULES 3 - 6
ROALD & DAHL MANIA Y3 - 5
ONCE UPON A TIME K - 3

FRIDAY 23rd January
WOLVES OF THE SEA K - 2
MEDIEVAL K - 2
MATHS DETECTIVES Y2 - 3
YOUNG ARTISTS Y2 - 6
BORROWERS Y3 - 5
NOTES & NODULES K - 2

Our next course starts on 19th January and runs for 5 sessions through till 22 March. For full details email steppingstones@australiangiftedsupport.com

Stepping Stones - Social Skills courses for 5 - 14 year olds

Social skills are the foundation stone of a child's development. With better developed social skills children can

- * have greater school success
- * increase their independence
- * interact with others more positively
- * establish and maintain quality friendships.

The Stepping Stones program is a specially designed course aimed to teach strategies to support gifted students in the development of

- * pro-social skills
- * emotional regulation
- * anger management
- * friendship building
- * conflict resolution
- * anti-bullying strategies
- * 'getting along' skills

PROFESSOR FRANÇOYS GAGNÉ SEMINAR

Thu 2 April 2009 9.00am to 4.30pm.

James Ruse Agricultural High School

The seminar will engage you with the updated version of Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (2008), how it defines intellectual giftedness, tools and instruments for identification and how to apply the model when programming and developing school provisions.

See the February NSWAGTC Events form for full details and download the [Gagné Registration Form](#) to register.

OTHER USEFUL WEB SITES

www.nswagtc.org.au

The NSW Association for Gifted and Talented Children Inc offers a wealth of information for parents and teachers of gifted children.

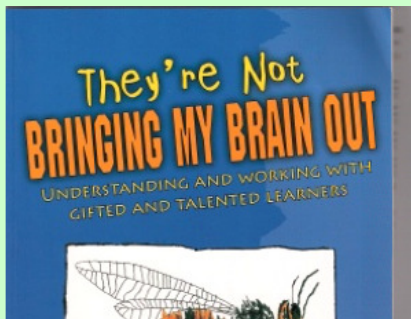
Best Mind Wet

www.giftedresources.org

Gifted Resources is an information service providing items of interest for parents and teachers of gifted students and the service providers who cater for them. Services include:

- Consultations
- Guest speakers
- Lecture presentations & Film Discussions
- Information packs
- Internet site & Email Newsletter
- Books, educational games & CDs for sale

BOOK REVIEW



DEVELOPING POTENTIAL - ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent has been used by education departments and parents and teachers for the past 20 years as a way of describing the elements of giftedness and the catalysts that will have an impact both positive and negative on the development of talent from the natural giftedness a person may be born with. Over the e-newsletters that AGSC produces in 2009 we plan to address different components of this model. Initially we will look at some of the intra-personal catalysts that are important for talent development or developing potential.

The intra-personal characteristics (2003) are split into 2 sections

PHYSICAL/MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Appearance, handicaps, health

Temperament, personality traits, well being

SELF-MANAGEMENT (which increases with maturity)

Awareness of self/others

Strengths and weaknesses and emotions

Motivation/Volition

Needs, interests, intrinsic motives, values

Resource allocation, adaptive strategies, effort

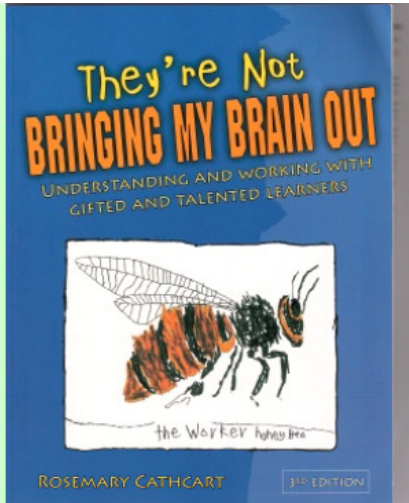
One of the intra-personal catalysts that comes up most regularly in the social skills courses we run is anxiety or worry. The ability to manage or regulate our emotions is vitally important for day to day living, social interaction and developing potential. I'd like to share some very useful information from an article by Maureen Neihart about Learning to cope with anxious feelings that appeared in the California Association for the Gifted Journal – The communicator

“As students progress along the trajectory of higher achievement, they encounter greater levels of stress. Even strong students can feel anxious when initially confronting the challenge of accelerated content or higher expectations.That's why learning to cope with anxious feelings is a basic competency for being psychologically prepared for high performance. If students lack the skills they need to manage their stress, they may question their ability to succeed and be tempted to withdraw academically or socially or to disengage from learning or attempting anything new.

Stress gets such a bad rap that it's easy to forget that it's not the enemy. We need stress. Heightened anxiety facilitates achievement because it sharpens our focus and keeps us working hard. The goal isn't to eliminate our anxiety, but to make it work more effectively for us. To become good managers of anxiety, children need to learn only three skills. Even young children can master basic skills necessary from preventing their fears from compromising their experiences if they practice. They simply need to learn to :

Breathe, Relax and Keep moving toward the things they fear

BREATHING - Deep controlled breathing helps keep a lid on anxiety as it keeps the right balance of oxygen in the blood stream. Elite performers use this as part of their pre-performance routine for this reason. The breathing should be slow and deep. If the child places a hand on their chest and one on their belly button and takes some long



This book provides a clear discussion of the issues involved for everyone living with or working with a gifted child, including the child. It sets out four key concepts for understanding and meeting the needs of gifted learners (The REACH Model).

- Generating a high level of interest in learning
- Development of “Tools of Thought”
- Development of Intellectual and Creative Potential
- Foster emotional, social and ethical development

Books Available from Australian Gifted Support Centre

RRP + postage

They're not Bringing out my Brain -
R.,Cathcart A\$44.00

Upsidedown Brilliance – L.K. Silverman
A\$59.60

slow breaths the bottom hand should move out more than the top one if they are breathing properly.

RELAX – It is not possible to be afraid and relaxed at the same time. Fear produces tension while relaxation releases tension. One way to reduce tension is to stretch you toes back and forwards, stretching the achillis tendon, do this for about 3 minutes, only stretch so you can feel the stretch but it shouldn't hurt. This is best done lying down on your back, but can be done sitting on a chair. Use the breathing at the same time.

KEEP MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE THINGS THEY FEAR – Anxious feelings decrease when we face the things we fear while staying relaxed. The experience of small successes in facing the fear is very powerful in learning to cope with anxiety. Parents and teachers must be careful not to rescue children from situations that make them anxious. Learning to cope with anxious feeling is an essential skill for preparing for life. Some people are more vulnerable to stress than others, but one thing is universal – developing abilities requires a tolerance for stress and anxiety. We don't improve without it.

Another important thing for parents to remember is that our children learn more from what we do than what we say. So how do you model managing your anxiety, employing the above skills and also talking about how you feel and how you coped is powerful for your children who often don't get to see their parents experiencing what they are.

To help support the development of these skills the Stepping Stones program teaches a range of strategies and uses a range of visual supports to help the children use these skills successfully both in social interactions and learning situations.

Contact Us

enquiries@australiangiftedsupport.com