

**New Zealand Centre
for Gifted Education**
Empowering Extraordinary Minds

June 2017

E-Resource for Contributing Schools



What we have been learning: *Personal Development*

During Gifted Awareness Week, we focus on raising awareness about all things related to giftedness. Many of our students come to us feeling that they don't quite fit but without much understanding of why they feel that way. One of the "Eight Great Grips" of gifted students, documented by Judy Galbraith after interviewing 400 gifted students ranging in age from 7-18, is that no one ever explains to them what giftedness is – we certainly find that to be the case for most. The Personal Development strand of the New Zealand Centre for Gifted Education's curriculum addresses this and aligns with our curriculum aim for students to develop an understanding of themselves as gifted learners. Children explore definitions of giftedness from various experts, the characteristics of gifted children and how these apply to themselves, and unpack common issues and strategies for coping with these. They deepen their understanding of the characteristics, catalysts and barriers associated with giftedness through inquiring into the lives of eminent people, past and present, and gifted characters in printed and visual texts. Students also develop self-understanding in relation to their personalities, their dreams and their goals. The longer children participate in MindPlus, the greater depth they achieve in their understanding. Our vision is that children will leave us with the knowledge and skills to be able to self-advocate when necessary, a strong sense of who they are as gifted people, and of the possibilities their giftedness brings for them to contribute positively to their communities.

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“Peer tutoring using gifted students also takes away time they should be using for more advanced work, more rigor and more higher-level thinking.”

– Carolyn Coil

Why Gifted Kids May Not Be Great Tutors

by Ian Byrd

A great quote addressing a common misconception from Dina Brulles and Susan Winebrenner:

Surprising to some, gifted students do not make the best academic leaders because of their ability to learn more quickly and with less effort than others.

Gifted kids don't just learn faster... they learn *differently*. Brulles and Winebrenner continue:

Teachers recognize that many gifted students are abstract learners who make intuitive leaps in their thinking processes. They make connections between ideas and concepts that others do not make. They do not always follow the same linear-sequential steps as others when solving problems or reaching conclusions.

Since they think differently than other students, they cannot explain their thinking to other students. The result:

Therefore, they are frequently incapable of guiding others who learn in a more traditional manner, and are often impatient with classmates who learn more slowly than they.

But ... They're Done So Quickly!

Some kids chew up tasks and spit them out. Before you can sit back down, they're asking, "What do I do *now*?"

Instead of asking gifted kids to tutor their peers, develop:

- a differentiated task that is more appropriate to their needs, and that they won't finish so quickly.
- a system where kids can easily move onto a known activity after finishing required work, such as independent studies or ongoing creative works.

Weekly, Not Daily, Tasks

In my class, I tried to focus on larger, weekly tasks, due on Friday. These would be hefty enough so that kids could fill their free time throughout the week as needed.

Make parts of this task optional. This will help kids who *want* to take on the bigger task, but simply don't have the free time that your fastest-moving students have. They can complete the required parts, but leave the optional pieces unfinished.

Incorporate Talents

These larger tasks really work best when you can incorporate student talents. For example, rather than assigning a spelling task each day of the week, have students write a brief story using a more advanced set of words. As an option, let them illustrate the story, record an audio-book, or prepare a play for Friday.

The Ongoing Project

Then, if students finish their story before Friday, and have added an artistic element, and *still* need something to do, they can pick up their interest-based research project, experiment, or other creative task that has a longer (perhaps month-long) time-frame.

In each case, the tasks *have* to touch on students' passions, interests, and talents. Otherwise, we're just assigning more work.

The System

Kids should know what to move onto next. It can be as simple as an ordered list on the whiteboard for that week. Feel free to incorporate choices into the list as well. However you set it up, students should go to the list, not you, for their next step.

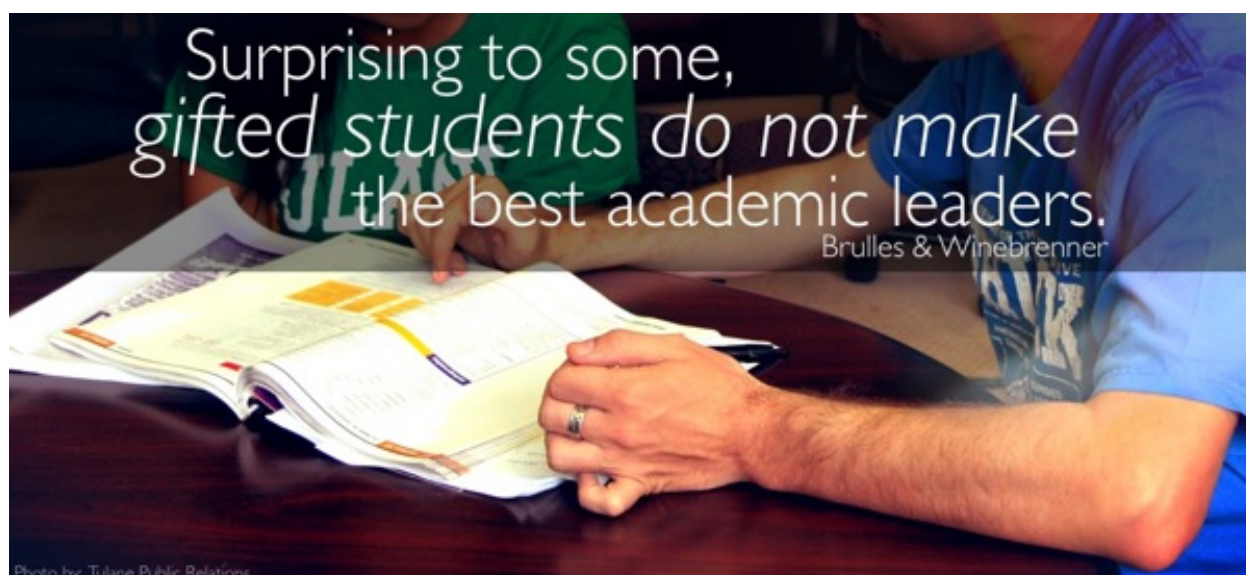
And, for those kids who truly fly through everything (and produce quality work), don't be afraid to ask them, "What would you like to do with your free time this week?" They might have a great idea that you would never have thought of.

References: *Maximizing Gifted Students' Potential In the 21st Century* by Dina Brulles, Ph.D., and Susan Winebrenner, M.S.;

<http://www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=17446>

Caroline Coil quote: <http://schoolsofthought.blogs.cnn.com/2012/11/14/ten-myths-about-gifted-students-and-programs-for-gifted/>

Retrieved from <http://www.byrdseed.com/why-gifted-kids-may-not-be-great-tutors/>
6 June 2017



Something to use in your classroom ...

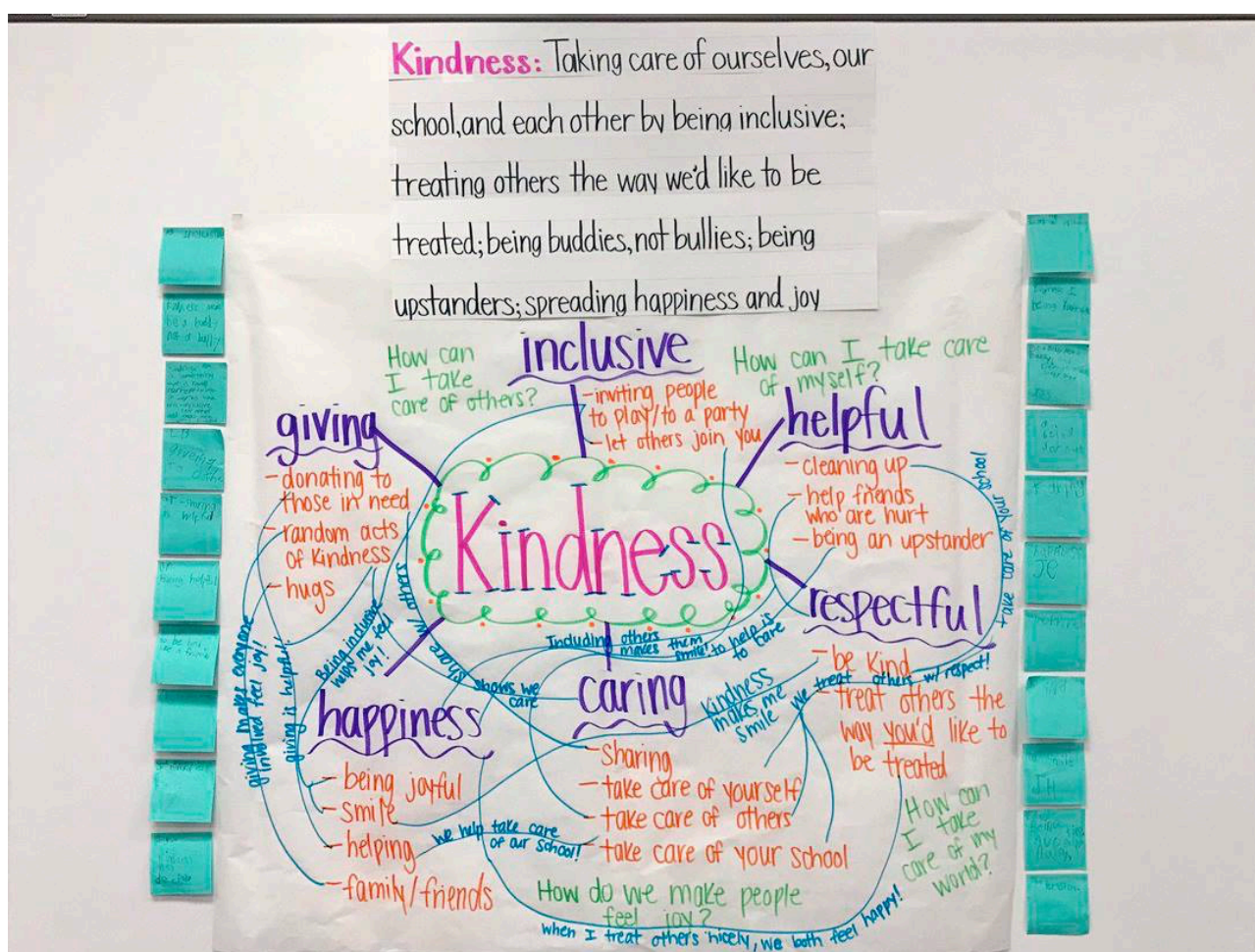
A new thinking routine from Ron Ritchhart and his team:

MAKING MEANING ROUTINE

A routine for constructing collective meaning of words, ideas, concepts, or events.

A word, concept or event is identified as the focus for this routine. Groups then work through each of the following prompts, recording their responses on chart paper to make collective meaning. Taking turns, each person:

- **responds** to the chosen focus with a single word. Each person's word must be unique so that it adds to the collective meaning.
- **adds on** to someone else's word with an additional word or phrase so as to elaborate in some way.
- **makes a connection** between ideas that are already written on the chart paper, drawing lines and writing on those lines to illuminate the connections.
- **records a question** that arises about for them about the focus topic, based on what is emerging
- **writes their own definition** of the word, topic, concept or event being explored, based on the group's "Making-Meaning discussion" as recorded on the chart paper.



In this example, the teacher has summarised responses, elaborations, connections and questions in a plenary session with the class, and the students' individual contributions are recorded on the post-it notes on either side of the chart. A synthesis of students' individual definitions of the concept appears at the top of the chart.



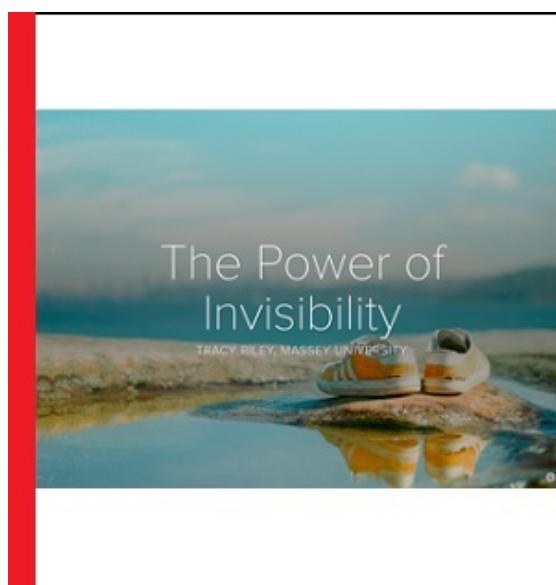
New Zealand Centre for Gifted Education Gifted Awareness Blog Tour

1st-30th June 2017



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NZCGE is once again hosting the annual Gifted Awareness blog tour, which runs for the month of June. Of the blogs already shared on the tour, we highly recommend these for teachers:

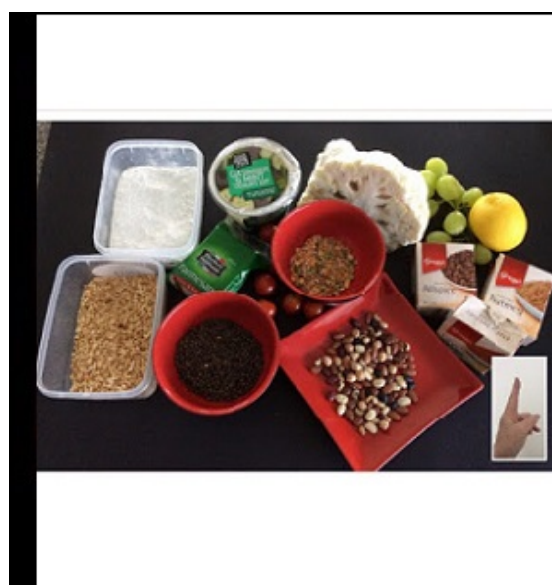


The Power of Invisibility

by Assoc Prof Tracy Riley

We need to understand the ways in which gifted learners in New Zealand have become invisible, mainly through measures that do not acknowledge their diversity, and despite promises of visibility through a policy that mandates appropriate educational responses to their special abilities and qualities.

<https://spark.adobe.com/page/prnQeUXSdAQiF/>



Seasoned with Love

by Elaine Le Sueur

The way that education is delivered has undergone huge change over the last twenty years and will continue to do so as access to technology is refined and improved. Success hinges on mastering the ability to do things differently, and herein lies a challenge because educator awareness of the possibilities can be a green light or a road block.

<http://made2share.blogspot.co.nz/>



Practicing Empathy and Compassion: Protecting the well-being of child advocates

by Anonymous

Our child has diverse needs. He is a gifted learner and excels in math, reading, science, strategic thinking and picking up on the emotional vibes of others. He experiences debilitating anxiety, has perfectionistic tendencies, gets sensory overload with sound and light and, as an introvert, gets "peopled out" very, very quickly.

<https://spark.adobe.com/page/TKM2OqfXrfDRT/>

Keep an eye out for other blogs on the tour at: <http://nzcge.co.nz/blog+tour+2017> or follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/nzcge/>

