



8:ENRICHMENT

What do we mean by enrichment?

When considering the introduction of enrichment in your school, first ensure that colleagues are agreed on a definition.

INTRODUCTION

Enrichment has been variously described as

- 'A higher quality of work than the norm for the age group
 - Work covered in more depth
 - A broadening of the learning experience
 - Promoting a higher level of thinking
 - The inclusion of additional subject areas and/or activities
 - The use of supplementary materials beyond the normal range of resources.'
- (Teare, 1997).

As such, it is a form of differentiation. It can also overlap, in many contexts, with the associated notion of extension.

Extension provides opportunities for accelerated progress, and access to new and more challenging concepts or content. Enrichment might be said to involve staying with a theme, subject or skill and developing it in *depth*; 'rounding out' the basic curriculum subjects with a wider context; relating learning to new areas; and/or providing pupils with experiences outside the 'regular' curriculum (*breadth*). Many activities involve both.

Thus when the two combine, enriched and extended development in the able child could be likened to a 'two-way stretch' (Eyre and Marjoram, 1990). Freeman (1998) points out that enrichment is '*not* a supplementary diet which depends on whether there is enough money for 'extra' material and tuition' It should always be integrated with whole-school provision for the highly able, indeed for pupils of all abilities.

Some commentators associate enrichment with the development of certain qualities, especially problem solving, creative thinking, initiative and self-direction, discovery, higher order thinking skills, profound personal interests, self-acceptance, and the courage to be different. These qualities are not limited to certain subjects in the

curriculum but are key indicators of high ability in a variety of disciplines. Opportunities for enrichment of these kinds should be created in the classroom as well as beyond lesson time, in school as well as outside it.

The terms 'enrichment' and 'extension' are in many ways preferable to 'differentiation', which can be associated with a 'deficit model' of provision, i.e. of supporting pupils with problems.

WHY IS ENRICHMENT AN IMPORTANT FOCUS IN THE EDUCATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS?

- Most evidence submitted to the Education and Employment Committee for its Report on the Highly Able (1999) supported the use of enrichment and extension to improve provision for the more able.
- Able children need as much motivation and recognition as other pupils, sometimes more. Unless their needs, interests and talents are explored and addressed, there can be a tendency for able pupils to 'languish' in the core National Curriculum. There is also the possibility, especially in mixed ability classrooms, that teachers may assume that able children will motivate themselves and keep themselves interested. This belief is not borne out by the research. Enrichment opportunities should motivate them and allow them to investigate their interests.
- Some able children, despite their ability, are not used to encountering risk or the unfamiliar, or are not happy with it when they do. They may fear failure or grow over-dependent on routines. It is important that all highly able children are given opportunities to meet failure and to encounter new experiences; only in this way can they learn to transfer their learning, and to deepen it.
- Teare (1997) makes the point that pupils of high ability should work together on occasion. Enrichment sessions, i.e. outside the classroom, allow a 'gathering of like minds' even if the school's normal grouping policy is to mix abilities.
- Highly able pupils are rarely highly able in all areas. Enrichment sessions out of class, as long as they are highly motivating, make it easier to support children in areas of difficulty away from peer-group pressures in class, and other negative factors.
- For the benefit of underachieving able pupils, in common with other pupils, the school should foster an ethos that values achievement. Enrichment sessions, i.e. outside normal lessons, enable high achievement to be celebrated in a supportive environment.
- There is a continuing debate about the comparative merits of the various types of differentiation. This will have an inevitable impact on schools when they are considering their provision for the highly able. Such schools would do well to get actively involved in this debate.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER?

- Before enrichment can be introduced there arises the question of who should have enrichment opportunities. This implies establishing consistent and flexible methods of using and acting on assessment in all contexts, at the level of the cohort and of the individual class. (The launch pad on extension suggests methods that are relatively quick and easy to administer.) Remember, too, that pupils of *all* abilities should be given such opportunities from time to time. This will encourage seemingly 'average' pupils to show unexpected abilities and interests, while ensuring that slow workers are not disadvantaged on every occasion. Teare (1997) cites book weeks and residential visits as examples of opportunities that can stimulate and develop pupils with a wide range of abilities. Try planning enrichment opportunities first. Only then decide which pupils might benefit from them.
- It is simpler to plan enrichment tasks, materials and opportunities in the course of normal planning of lessons or schemes than to do so in isolation. Moreover, highly able pupils are more likely in the long term to benefit from enrichment opportunities which are integrated with the main curriculum, and with other activities in and out of school. It has been shown that when enrichment is in isolated sessions, and not part of general school provision, any extra progress made by the highly able may for the most part 'settle back' to the level of their peers' progress in the longer term (Freeman, 1998). One reason is that the gifted and talented, like all pupils, pass through different stages of development, so their enrichment opportunities need to be aligned as closely as possible with their different developmental rates.
- Freeman (1998) highlights some other potential difficulties with 'separate' enrichment sessions. Children who are known to attend enrichment events can report peer-group problems when they return to lessons; if the opportunities entail missing other school work, children can fall behind and get 'out of synch' with their peers.
- Freeman (1998) warns that enrichment activities for the highly able often lack clear goals. This problem is particularly noticeable in 'decontextualised' activities out of class or out of school. Eyre and Marjoram (1990) advocate applying a model of enrichment at whole school level. This should incorporate a focus on higher order skills and 'outstanding qualities' into the core curriculum, as well as beyond it. The result would be that clear goals could be set for any enrichment opportunity, whatever the context. Eyre and Marjoram describe two models – Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (1956) and Renzulli's *Enrichment Triad Model* (1977). Bloom emphasises the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Renzulli proposes three types of activity, general exploration, group training, and investigations of group problems, between which pupils should move freely. Both of these models allow teachers to identify processes and qualities that they wish their pupils to develop. Eyre and Marjoram (1990) describe and list these in detail.
- Among the many kinds of enrichment opportunity you should consider are:
 - **Extraction.** Sessions might be run, for example, by the special needs department. This will usually involve exploration of one subject or interest, e.g. the media, such as news bulletins. Exposure to a new subject might be tackled this way, e.g. Latin for able linguists.

- **Support within class.** Assistants, outside experts or mentors might work alongside pupils during lessons to provide them with extra intellectual stimulus, to introduce unusual elements that are not normally covered, or to mediate in the use of alternative or new resources. Alternatively, an assistant might support the rest of the class while the teacher fulfils this role.
- **Self-directed projects.** In response to students' achievement, teachers could reward the highly able by asking them to design and undertake their own in-depth projects in a relevant area of interest.
- **Homework enrichment.** Students can be given thought-provoking tasks or tasks which, out of school, allow them access to new contexts or materials for study. These tasks may be cross-curricular, or allow 'transference' from the subject in which the learning originally took place.
- **Access to enrichment materials.** Pupils might be loaned materials other than the usual reference books, or given access to the Internet or CD-ROMs to research a topic more widely.
- **Opportunities to work with talented adults or older peers.** These could include 'shadowing', special workshops run by visiting experts or groups, coaching, eg. in games, PE or music, and masterclasses, e.g. at the local university.
- **Clubs and societies.** Participation in clubs, at lunchtime, after school or organised elsewhere, can enrich pupils, especially if what they offer transcends pupils' existing knowledge base. Ideally, a range should be available, covering academic and other interests.
- **Visits.** These could be visits to school by specialists, or visits by pupils to see specialists or places of interest. There is a variety of organisations and residential centres which run programmes for the more able (see Teare, 1997). LEAs may organise or broker suitable activities; local school clusters may work together to organise out-of-school events. Special tasks in the community, e.g. environmental projects, could be arranged.
- **School newspapers, radio stations, subject-based magazines.** Organising and writing for a school publication or radio station offers many enrichment opportunities.
- **Competitions and quizzes.** These could be inter-class, inter-year or inter-house, and either cross-curricular or confined to a particular subject area.
- **'Feature days' or festivals.** Such events can showcase work in a particular area.
- **Suspension of the normal timetable.** Lessons could be suspended, for anything from a day up to a week, in favour of enrichment opportunities, whether for the highly able or for all pupils. e.g. on a particular theme or in a special subject area
- Planning for enrichment opportunities in the classroom can be incorporated into existing planning documentation. Appropriate columns can be used to indicate additional concepts, skills, attitudes, knowledge and resources – or new applications of these in different contexts - for highly able pupils. A separate column can show connected enrichment opportunities which are offered out of lesson time. Of course, not all enrichment opportunities can be planned for. Teachers need to be alert to special interests which emerge in lessons but which may not be appropriate for all the class to pursue in depth. They also need to be aware of those pupils who already have skills or knowledge in the topic or subject being taught. For example, if a group

of pupils are already well informed about the Blitz, could they be asked to carry out research on the British bombing of Dresden?

- Are teachers able to provide further resources, information or talking points for such pupils in subsequent lessons? Can they allow pupils to broaden their knowledge or pursue these interests at another time?
- Eyre and Marjoram (1990) and Teare (1997 and 1999) offer much practical advice on devising enrichment activities and on writing materials. Both give numerous case studies of effective practice; Teare (1999) includes many full examples of activities. Teare (1997) supplies titles of commercially produced resources and lists organisations which provide enrichment opportunities.
- However, always start with discussions within school, so that staff have a sense of ownership of new initiatives, and enrichment opportunities are truly suited to the needs of your pupils. It will take time to construct a coherent approach to enrichment. Colleagues can share responsibility for producing or finding materials over a long period. Schools can benefit from pooling their expertise and sharing enrichment resources.
- The following list, partly drawn from Teare (1999), could be used as a list of criteria against which to measure the effectiveness of any enrichment activity or programme, or of published material:
 - Is it accessible to everyone at the start?
 - Are the skills/knowledge it teaches 'transferable' to other areas, or 'cross-curricular'?
 - Does it allow further challenges, i.e. can it be extended?
 - Does it promote individuality of response?
 - Does it allow pupils to search in a variety of directions?
 - Does it encourage originality and invention?
 - Does it involve information processing, analysing, speculating, evaluating, reflecting, making and testing hypotheses, problem solving, proving or explaining, synthesising, decision making?
 - Does it promote discussion and communication?
 - Does it address the 'frontiers of knowledge, understanding or skill' of able pupils?
 - Does it maintain a good balance between closed and open-ended elements?
 - Does it involve varied inputs and ask for varied outcomes?
 - Does it maintain a good balance of pace/urgency and reflection?
 - Will it give a sense of satisfaction, fulfilment and enjoyment?
 - Does it suggest opportunities for further development or research?

WHAT MIGHT WE DO IN SCHOOL?

- Always begin by considering enrichment alongside other issues and concepts relevant to the highly able, e.g. pupil grouping, acceleration, and extension.
- At the level of whole school and/or cohort, you could audit current enrichment opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom. Are they offered only to the highly able, or to those with a particular profile, e.g. those considered 'well behaved'? Are only certain kinds of enrichment opportunities offered, e.g. only clubs; only group activities, never activities for individuals; or only occasional residential visits? Are the

only enrichment activities those offered out of class, or even out of school? Are activities followed up with pupils? The wider the range of types of enrichment, the more likely they are to have real and long-term effects. The more closely they are integrated with all planning for provision, assessment and progression, at whole school level, the greater will be their benefit.

- Enrichment opportunities can often be exploited and developed from existing teaching and activities. For example, when the highly able are about to begin an activity they might be given a specific focus or project to complete, and asked to follow it up with their own self-evaluation and further self-directed learning. 'Theme days' and clubs could be broadened in scope to include more complex challenges for the more able.
- When highly able pupils are given enrichment opportunities, they should be involved in setting their own achievement targets and in evaluating the opportunities. You could even ask them to help in the design and planning of enrichment opportunities in the first place. Enrichment offers able pupils a chance to enhance their metacognitive skills, i.e. to become aware of, and to discuss their own learning.
- Enrichment is a good focus upon which to discuss, devise, collate and share resources with colleagues, neighbouring schools, or resource bases.

RECOMMENDED READING

Battersby, D., 1996. 'Enriching Devon cream at Ivybridge'. In: *Flying High*, Spring 1996, Issue 3. Northampton: NACE.

Eyre, D. and Marjoram, T., 1990. *Enriching and Extending the National Curriculum*. London: Kogan Page.

Freeman, J., 1998. *Educating the Very Able: Current international research*. London: OFSTED/Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Sempala-Ntege, B., 1997. 'The power of the pen: A weekend enrichment course for able year 9 and 10 writers'. In: *Educating Able Children*, Spring 1997, Issue 1. Oxford: NACE.

Teare, J.B., 1997. *Effective Provision for Able & Talented Children*. Stafford: Network Educational Press.

Teare, J.B., 1999. *Effective Resources for Able and Talented Children*. Stafford: Network Educational Press.

SEE ALSO LAUNCHPADS ON

Acceleration
Pupil Grouping
Differentiation
Extension