

## Unit 2, Section 5

### Developing teaching and learning for gifted and talented pupils:

#### The value of enrichment and study support

#### Key issues

- Schools should supplement the curriculum with additional opportunities.
- There are many types of enrichment, which serve different purposes.
- An important aspect of teaching and learning for gifted and talented pupils is enrichment. One definition of this is 'exploring areas of learning that other pupils do not cover, but at broadly the same level.'
- Enrichment should cater for pupils' affective as well as their cognitive needs.
- There is evidence of a wide range of practice, which needs to be disseminated
- The value of particular forms of enrichment should be assessed and evaluated.

#### The purpose and nature of enrichment

Freeman (1998) has this to say of the purpose of enrichment: 'The point of enrichment for the highly able is to relate learning to other areas, and play with ideas so as to come up with new ones.'

Opportunities for enrichment can be seen as falling under four main headings:

1. Those which enable pupils to explore aspects of a subject in greater depth, or to focus on the more complex aspects of a subject
2. Those which offer pupils opportunities for practice, coaching, and the mastery of specific skills
3. Those which enable pupils to use and apply existing knowledge whilst being freed from the constraints of the syllabus, or of timetabling.
4. Those which aim to introduce pupils to new experiences and ideas to broaden horizons and/or to raise expectations.

Enrichment should not be viewed as directed simply to pupils' cognitive development. It can play a valuable role in helping the gifted and talented in their emotional development. The pressure on gifted and talented pupils has been considered earlier in the course, and Leyden (1998) made the interesting point that adolescence is a difficult time for them in one particular which it is easy to overlook. Their ability to look at the world and to weigh up the difference between the actual and the ideal can outstrip

their emotional ability to deal with their discoveries.

Van Tassel-Baska (1992) firmly places the affective in her quartet of goals for enrichment, along with the other important aspects.

A. Cognitive

- To develop high level proficiency in the agreed area of learning.
- To become an independent investigator
- To appreciate the world of ideas
- To enhance higher level thinking skills
- To encourage a spirit of inquiry

B. Affective

- To increase self-understanding
- To develop ways of coping with the 'gifted and talented' label

C. Social/Behavioural

- To develop social skills
- To enhance understanding of relationships

D. Aesthetic

- To develop an appreciation of the arts
- To enable creativity

It is interesting to use this model to characterise the kinds of enrichment provided for the gifted and talented. The focus in many schools is on A and B, with D coming into play in creative arts subjects only, and C being reserved more usually for pupils with identified special needs. There is, however, an important factor to take into account if any provision is to be fully effective. We need to develop, with our students, an understanding of the particular conditions which being gifted creates for them in their schools and social environments (Betts and Niehart 1988).

## Providing enrichment

When a school is planning to provide enrichment it has to consider three basic factors: how it will select pupils for the programme, what it intends the programme to achieve, and how it will ensure links between the programme and other aspects of the pupils' educational experience. It should also be remembered that the extent of enrichment activity is less important than the quality of each individual experience; more is not necessarily better. Within the school, enrichment activities may occur as part of (a) the school's distinct teaching and learning programme, in existing lessons and in different and additional lessons, and/or (b) a complementary study support programme. Milgram and Godring (1991) define these as 'the replacement system' and 'the supplementary system'.

*The replacement system* fits Renzulli's model, which he believed should form the basis of a whole school improvement scenario. Renzulli's own term for this is the 'Schoolwide Enrichment Model'. It has various components, for example 'Enrichment clusters', which have a special place in the timetable, usually to the tune of half a day per week. Students of all ages who have common interests come together to pursue them.

*The supplementary system* does not set out to replace school studies. It usually takes place out of school time and includes such activities as masterclasses, summer schools, and Saturday schools. The most prominent example is NAGTY (The National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/gifted>) which offers national summer schools where students can study a broader range of subjects at a more advanced level than is available in schools. NAGTY also organises regional enrichment, and offers support and enrichment via an on-line community for its young members. NAGTY, which is funded by the DfES, is modelled on the USA's Centre for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins University (<http://www.jhu.edu/gifted>).

The programme is based on the following premises:

- Academically talented students should have the opportunity to learn, and to develop skills, at a pace and level which matches their abilities, rather than their age and 'grade' level.
- Academically talented students require a rigorous, challenging course of studies
- Students' academic accomplishments should be acknowledged and rewarded.
- Schools may not be in a position to provide for the extended needs of the gifted and talented. NAGTY should therefore be seen as a part of what the larger educational community can offer to support and challenge the most able.

In 'Excellence in Cities: Further guidance on the gifted and talented strand', the DfES offered advice on enrichment, which has relevance for all schools. It said 'Schools are encouraged to include different curricular provision, either within or alongside the statutory curriculum, taking advantage of the opportunities for curricular flexibility presented by the current and proposed statutory requirements'.

The DfES proposes 'developing a broader curriculum alongside the statutory curriculum, including subjects such as philosophy, for example' and 'building opportunities for enrichment and extension activity, into their teaching and learning programmes, in existing lessons and, possibly, in

different or additional lessons.'

Most schools are already promoting a broad and diverse programme of enrichment activities. Expertise in the field is developing quickly, and it is important that good practice be disseminated widely. Opportunities for enrichment can also occur in the local community, or on a regional or national basis. A school's teaching and learning programme for the gifted and talented should specify such opportunities, as well as emphasising what the school itself can provide. Information on such opportunities is available on an increasingly wide scale.

For example, the DfES website for gifted and talented education, G&TWISE, offers information on a range of enrichment activities (<http://www2.teachernet.gov.uk/gat>). A variety of national bodies offer enrichment opportunities. You can find details of these in the appendix at the end of this section.

## Evaluating enrichment

Formal evaluation of enrichment programmes has been relatively uncommon both here and abroad.

In 1993, Gallaher (1993) observed that, 'regretfully, little has been written on evaluation. Indeed, we have excellent enrichment activities which have not been evaluated. People tend to trust the professional judgment of a good teacher.' Above all, there does not appear to have been any substantial longitudinal studies of effects upon students who have taken part in enrichment programmes. A sombre note was sounded by Moon et al (1994), who looked at the impact of a well-planned programme for schools developed by Purdue University in the USA. They found that the programme had had only moderate long-term effects. The extra progress the students had made was not maintained, and for the most part they settled back to that of their peers who had not experienced the programme. Nevertheless, there are examples of the evaluation of students' response to enrichment opportunities, and the results have been encouraging. Research into the effects of the Johns Hopkins programme has concluded that all the courses on offer increased the students' knowledge and enthusiasm in the areas studied.

Freeman has collected such research findings as exist, and she reports on the high-level courses and competitions for the academically gifted in Germany. In an evaluation at the end of one of the courses, boys and girls were equally better able than formerly to control their own learning. This applied at both general and specific levels, and the students had improved upon their attitudes to co-operative learning. In a similar programme in Israel it was found that students had enjoyed science teaching which they saw as 'real' and different from that at school. Moreover, their leisure activities were found to be more varied than those

of peers of equal ability who had not had the experience.

A more recent review conducted by the NFER (2003) found that "there is little evidence of the long-term benefits of enrichment. There are also few criteria for evaluating the coherence of enrichment activities in relation to the whole curriculum".

Finally, there has been extensive research into Renzulli's enrichment model, which has had a positive impact, particularly when personal/affective involvement is at stake, and the outcome has been a change of attitudes and level of commitment. The creators of the model themselves offer detailed guidance on evaluation of the programme and product (Renzulli and Reis 1997). A general conclusion appears to be that students taking part show increased creativity and a more constructive attitude to school, and that there is greater understanding and participation on the part of staff.

A school which is intent on setting up enrichment opportunities for its gifted and talented students should see evaluation as an indispensable part of the programme. The outcomes will not only be essential to the planning of future provision but will be of great value when disseminated to other schools.

The co-ordinator, in association with his or her colleagues, is well placed to analyse the effectiveness of the enrichment work taking place in the school. The following questions may be found helpful:

- What are the broad aims and learning objectives for the enrichment activity?
- Does the content of the programme allow for these aims to be met?
- How can the programmes(s) make best use of the strengths of staff and the resources in the school/cluster?
- Are there links to the normal school curriculum? How can the two forms of provision complement each other?
- What teaching approaches are to be used? What approaches would be most appropriate for the most able?
- Will the programme make use of ICT?
- Will pupils need to carry out independent work?
- Does the programme's design take into account previous experience of running these kinds of programmes?
- How can coherence of programmes across the school/cluster be achieved and yet allow for diversity and quality of the totality of provision?

- What are the funding arrangements? Does the programme represent value for money educationally and otherwise?
- What staff will be involved? What might the training/staffing implications be? Who will have responsibility for the running of the programme?
- How will parents be informed?
- What is the optimal length/timing of the programme?
- What will the criteria for selection be?
- How will we ensure the optimal mix of students and make certain that there is equity in opportunities to take part?
- How will the programme be monitored as it progresses?  
How will the students be monitored?
- Will we build in students' self-assessment or self-evaluation?
- How could students monitor their own involvement in enrichment programmes and be involved in selecting those that are right for them?
- What summative evaluation of the programme will there be?
- What tools could be used to evaluate the longer-term impact of the programme?
- How might the programme help in the monitoring of the gifted and talented group?
- How might the programme help in identifying the specific talents and abilities of those taking part, and of other students?

## Activity 2.4

### Activity

- Decide upon the criteria you would use to advise on the development of enrichment activities in your school.
- In the light of these criteria, what developments would you seek to put into practice in your school?

### Reflection

- Reflect upon current enrichment opportunities for gifted and talented pupils in your school, and consider their effectiveness.

## Learning outcomes

- To recognise the need to supplement classroom provision with additional opportunities
- To recognise the principles that underlie enrichment opportunities
- To understand the different types of enrichment programmes and reflect critically on their role within the school's overall enrichment programme.
- To recognise that enrichment should meet affective as well as cognitive needs
- To recognise the importance of assessing opportunities

for enrichment

- To understand the essentials of assessing the value of programmes.

## References

**Betts G. & Niehart M.(1988)** Profiles of the gifted and talented. Gifted Child Quarterly, 3(2)

**Callahan, G. (1993)** in Heller, K.A., Monks, F.J., Passow, A.H. International Handbook of Research and Development in Gifted and Talented, Pergamon Press

**Freeman, J. (1998)** Educating the Very Able: Current International Research. London: The Stationary Office

**Hickey (1988)** in Van Tassel Baska, J. (1992) Planning Effective Curriculum for Gifted Learners. Denver: Love Publishing

**Leyden, S. (1998)** Supporting the Child of Exceptional Ability. London: David Fulton Publishers

**NFER / White, K et Al. (2003):** "What works for gifted and talented pupils: a review of recent research"

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/pims-data/summaries/lgt-what-works-for-gifted-and-talented-pupils-a-review-of-recent-research.cfm>

**Renzulli, J. S., & Reis, S. M. (1997)** The schoolwide enrichment model: A how-to guide for educational excellence (2nd Ed.). Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press

**NFER (1998)** Evaluation of the 1998 Summer Schools Programme: Full report

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research/publications/>

**Ofsted (2001)** Providing for gifted and talented pupils: an evaluation of Excellence in Cities and other grant funded programmes

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/public/docs01/giftedandtalented.pdf>

## Additional readings

## Useful websites

- **G&TWISE** <http://www2.teachernet.gov.uk/gat>
- **NAGC (National Association for Gifted Children)** <http://www.nagcbrtain.org.uk/>
- **National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth** <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/gifted/>

## Appendix

Mathematics is particularly well served on the national and regional scene. There are mathematics clubs at universities all over Britain, and national competitions and challenges for able young mathematicians. The latter are co-ordinated by the Maths Association and the UK Maths Trust (UKMT). See also the excellent mathematics website NRICH at <http://www.nrich.maths.org/>.

The Royal Institution, well known for its televised Christmas lectures, introduced masterclasses for 13 and 14 year olds as long ago as 1980, and the network has been since been widened to cover much of the country. Details can be found on the Royal Institution's web site at <http://www.ri.ac.uk>.

Charities and trusts are also a source of help. For example, the Tomorrow's Achievers initiative, a nationwide scheme launched by the Gabbitas, Truman and Thring Educational Trust, aims to arrange masterclasses for gifted children, to provide financial help for children who otherwise could not afford to attend, and to run in-service training for teachers to help them meet the needs of gifted children. Details can be had found at <http://www.gabbitas.co.uk/index.aspx?p=1077>.

Among national bodies, the Youth Sport Trust offers a variety of opportunities for talented pupils. You can find more information on the YTS web site at <http://www.youthsporttrust.org>.

Examples of arts institutions include the National Youth Theatre and the Royal Opera House. The latter has an extensive education programme, with numerous projects where music, opera and ballet cross boundaries. More information about the programme can be obtained from <http://www.royaloperahouse.org/Education>. The web site for the National Youth Theatre is <http://nyt.org.uk>.

Summer schools, both for younger secondary aged pupils and for sixth formers, have become part of gifted and talented provision in many local areas. Those for younger pupils are often organised by schools, mostly under the auspices of local authorities, whilst Higher Education institutions are typically responsible for those intended for highly able sixth formers.

Aimhigher programmes around the country also cater for gifted and talented pupils (among others), offering enrichment activities in vocational as well as academic areas. Many areas also offering mentoring programmes, an effective way of addressing the affective needs of such pupils. Further information is available at:

**For additional information on help and resources for secondary school students, see also our Aimhigher briefing elsewhere on this website.**

<http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk/home/index.cfm>.

Teachers packs and resource materials for Years 9 to 12 are available at:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/aimhigher/>.

Local authority music and performing arts services can be an invaluable support to those who are gifted musically, providing expert tuition, performance opportunities and the companionship of like-minded pupils.