

Rosemary Cathcart, ONZM, QSM, Ph.D., Dip. Ed. PG, Dip. Sec. Teaching

Rosemary has been intensively involved in gifted education since the early 1980s in a very wide variety of sometimes unexpected roles.

First years... Her first involvement was as a surprised parent when she and her husband discovered they had somehow produced two children in this category. Her own teacher training had not included this field, and neither, she discovered, had the training of primary school teachers. The unhappiness of their own children at school prompted her and her husband to join the NZ Assn for Gifted Children. Rosemary became national president in 1984, and consequently shortly afterwards she was asked to develop and teach a gifted programme at a large central Auckland primary school. She has been professionally involved ever since.

The observation and research involved in that first programme laid the basis for the development of what is now known as the REACH Model of Gifted Needs and a raft of associated practical strategies. Throughout this period, she worked closely with Professor George Parkyn, NZAGC Patron and an internationally respected academic for his work in this and other fields, sharing extended discussions with him and later editing his collected papers.

In-between years... Over the next few years, Rosemary began delivering teacher workshops, developed and taught two papers on giftedness for the Auckland College of Education's Advanced Studies for Teachers, took part in a Ministry of Education contract looking at schools' management of professional development, was appointed as Special Education's sole advisor on gifted children with a brief which ultimately took her around the country, organised a national conference in Palmerston North, and completed the first edition of her teacher's manual, *They're Not Bringing My Brain Out*.

Next steps... But gifted children were still largely neglected within our education system. Some central agency was needed, something which could make gifted education visible and accessible. Thus in 1995 Rosemary set up the George Parkyn National Centre for Gifted Education. Over the next ten years she developed its innovative One Day School programme which, with the help of outstanding teaching staff, ultimately reached out to include 18 venues and nearly 600 children. She also organised three further national conferences, brought international speakers to New Zealand, delivered scores of workshops for teachers ranging from pre-service trainees to school principals, supported parents, gave access to various researchers, and continued to lobby intensively for Ministry recognition, contributing to the setting up of a Ministerial Working Party on Gifted Education. She has served on the Ministry's gifted advisory panel from then on.

And now... Recognising teacher education as the key, in 2005 Rosemary left the Centre, set up REACH Education, and developed the award-winning Certificate of Effective Practice in Gifted Education, first delivered in 2006, attracting overseas as well as local teachers. Various short courses have been delivered. International connections have been strengthened, with various leading figures brought here as speakers. In 2010, Rosemary published *Differentiation Made Practical*, in 2016 she completed a PhD, in 2017 she became an invited member of the US-Based Columbus Group of gifted experts, in 2020 she published the 4th edition of *They're Not Bringing My Brain Out*, served as an invited member of the World Council's writing panel for its Global Principles for Professional Learning in Gifted Education, and developed a short "Gifted Intensive" course to supplement the Certificate course.

Latest... In addition to all the above, Rosemary is now heading the development of a One Day School programme in Rotorua!