

GIFTED & TALENTED LEARNERS:

Certificate in Effective Practice in Gifted Education

A practical course
on identifying and catering for
the gifted students in your school

PROSPECTUS AND COURSE OUTLINE

Developed and presented by REACH Education Consultancy

- New Zealand Ministry of Education accredited provider
- Endorsed by the Institute for the Study of Advanced Development (US)
- Winner of the 2017 US NAGC Professional Development Network Award



Introduction

Hello and welcome to our online course on gifted and talented learners. This booklet sets out for you the information you will need to help you decide whether this course is for you. (Note: We use New Zealand spelling conventions throughout. These may differ from those you are used to).

Please do not hesitate to contact us directly if you have any questions or need more information on any particular point before enrolling. You can either email us directly at reacheducation@xtra.co.nz or phone us on 07 347 2135 (+64 7 347 2135). We look forward to receiving your enrolment and working with you!

Why is REACH offering this course?

We originally created this course in New Zealand, in response to the changes made to this country's education regulations in 2005, making it mandatory for all schools to identify and meet the needs of their gifted learners.

Because this had not traditionally been part of teacher training, the education community itself recognised that many teachers at every level would need further professional development if they were to meet this requirement.

Since then, interest from outside the country has encouraged us to make the course more widely available, to teachers outside New Zealand as well as for other education professionals with access to gifted learners. We now regularly have teachers enrolling from various countries and are happy to work with applicants to adapt delivery times to match school schedules in those countries.

The course itself has also gained international recognition over this time. In 2013, the course won endorsement from the Institute for the Study of Advanced Development, as follows:

The Institute for the Study of Advanced Development (ISAD) endorses the philosophy of the Certificate of Effective Practice in Gifted Education course offered by REACH Education. This online education program enables teachers to gain a better understanding of gifted children, and to assimilate that understanding within the classroom. The content of the program is consistent with our philosophy. We support the work of REACH Education. Director Rosemary Cathcart is a founding member of ISAD's International Network, which includes professionals in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Hong Kong, New Zealand and The Philippines who promulgate our philosophy throughout the globe.

In 2017 the course won the US National Association for Gifted Children's Professional Development Network Award, understood to be the first time this award has been given outside the US itself. Also in 2017, our director Dr Rosemary Cathcart was made an invited member of the prestigious Columbus Group, its first international member.

What does the course offer?

The purpose of this course is to help you develop, practise and consolidate the practical skills you need for working with gifted learners, whether you are working with preschoolers, primary school students or high school students.

All of the material it includes is firmly grounded in the very considerable body of research and scholarship which now underpins this field, and there will be opportunities throughout for you to access this knowledge and to see how it explains and supports the work you are doing with your students.

However, the focus of the course is also very directly on the practical strategies themselves. You will learn a range of strategies covering the key aspects of both identifying and teaching gifted learners (taking into account the age level you are working with), and your course work will involve you in trialling these strategies for yourself. Ongoing feedback from your tutor will guide you in evaluating your progress. By the end of the course, you will have acquired a repertoire of effective strategies, and you will be confident and comfortable in their use and adaptation to meet the diverse needs of the gifted learners you encounter.

The course itself normally takes about eight months to complete.

- It is packaged in twelve fortnightly modules, which you will receive by email.
- You will be individually supported throughout by a tutor who is a highly experienced practitioner in this field and accredited by the New Zealand Ministry of Education as a professional development facilitator.

When you have successfully completed the course requirements, you will receive the REACH Certificate in Effective Practice in Gifted Education, verifying this and outlining what the course has involved.

Who is this course for?

This course has been designed to meet the needs of every educator who works with (or who would like to work with) gifted learners, at any level from early childhood through to high school, and who needs sound and proven practical strategies to support them in identifying and catering for these students.

It is open also to psychologists, counsellors and other specialist educators with an interest in this field who can arrange ongoing access to gifted students which will allow them to meet assessment requirements. In certain circumstances it can be taken by a parent who is home-schooling their child. (Feel free to discuss your eligibility with us if you are uncertain).

The course has been constructed so that each component includes material that will be relevant whatever age level you are teaching and whatever role you fulfil, whether that is as a classroom or centre teacher or whether you have more specialised responsibilities, such as being a special needs teacher or your school's GATE (Gifted And Talented Education) coordinator.

It is also designed to provide for people who come to the course with different prior levels of knowledge in this field and different purposes. For example:

- (a) you may already have significant existing theoretical knowledge obtained through completing university-level papers or courses but wish to balance this with practical knowledge and skills;
- (b) you may not feel ready to attempt more advanced work at university level, but you are comfortable with beginning at this practical level, with the possibility of moving on to more theoretical work at a later date;
- (c) you may have little or no prior knowledge and not wish to embark on more advanced studies, but simply want to acquire effective practical strategies soundly based on the research, so that you are confident about meeting the needs of the students you work with.

The course caters for all these possibilities.

What will the course cover?

Course outline

The course is built around three inter-dependent strands:

(1) Recognising the gifted learner

What is a "gifted learner"? Defining the concept in relation to your community and school. How giftedness manifests itself in a student's development, behaviour and learning. Why we use a multi-method approach to identification. Tools to use. Interpreting what we find: qualitative and quantitative information. Understanding cultural perspectives. Evaluating parent input. Recognising factors which can disguise giftedness.

(2) Identifying and understanding the needs of the gifted learner as a basis for planning appropriate provision for this student

Why is the gifted learner classified as a "special needs" student? In what ways do this student's needs differ from the majority? What are the implications for classroom or centre planning and provision? Needs related to learning. Needs related to emotional, social and ethical development. Needs related to the student's adult future as a member of the community. Thinking deeply about the ultimate purpose of gifted education.

(3) Practical strategies for meeting these needs

Creating the most productive environment in both a mixed ability and an ability-grouped setting. Using the conceptual approach to planning. Using the REACH model to provide a structure for lesson development. How to differentiate curriculum material effectively. Trialling a range of practical differentiation strategies. Using ability grouping. Knowing when acceleration is appropriate. Using an IEP. Working with parents. Record-keeping. Assessing progress. Evaluating your provisions and programme.

These three strands are linked together to form an in-depth exploration of how giftedness impacts on the student's experience of learning and of daily life, and of how we as educators can respond to make that experience positive and productive.

Assessment

There are three assessment components, all of equal value:

- 1) *Completion of the report-back sheets:* You will receive these with each fortnightly package. They provide a way for you to report on what you've been doing, the tools and strategies you've trialled and the outcome, to reflect on what you've learned, and to raise any queries you may have. They also allow your tutor to keep in touch with you, monitor your progress, and provide guidance and support on every aspect of your work on the course.
- 2) *A case study of an individual student:* This will give you an opportunity to practise using the identification tools you will receive and interpreting the results. You will be given detailed information on how to set up and carry out your case study, and your tutor will provide guidance throughout. You will be required to submit a brief report on your case study findings and a copy of the data on which your report is based.
- 3) *One assignment:* This will bring together the practical work you have done throughout the course on meeting the needs of the gifted learner. It will allow you to demonstrate that you have mastered the concepts and strategies you have encountered and have developed an in-depth understanding of gifted learners. It will not be in essay-form. Options will be available relevant to your specific role in relation to gifted learners.

NB: *All of the work you do on this course, including these assessment tasks, is designed to be of direct benefit to you and your school, centre or practice in developing effective provisions for your gifted learners.*

Resources

- 1) The required text for all participants is *They're Not Bringing My Brain Out*, by Rosemary Cathcart. This text is at present undergoing review in preparation for a new edition. If you are unable to obtain a copy of the current edition, please contact Rosemary who will be able to help. But first, please either:
 - in New Zealand, contact Learning Network NZ via their website, www.learningnetwork.ac.nz, phone 09 835 0912, or try
 - Amazon, Fish Pond, the Book Depository or a similar source.
- 2) Once your enrolment has been confirmed and before the course starts, we will email you a "Course Guide" with information about all the practical aspects of the course that you'll need to know.
- 3) You will also be given access to a comprehensive online Archive including:
 - a range of interesting papers and other readings to give extra depth and support to your modules and to provide a reference for you that you will be able to continue to use after the course is complete;
 - a special package of identification measures to use in your case study and later after you've finished the course;
 - a description of your options for your final assignment and detailed guidance on what's expected for each option.

Are there any entry requirements?

Yes. To enrol in this course, you must:

- (a) be a trained teacher or early childhood educator with at least provisional registration **or** have an appropriate qualification in a related field, eg educational psychology, counselling, etc (please feel welcome to discuss this with us if you are not sure if you qualify) **or**, subject to special conditions, be homeschooling your child or children;
- (b) have access to one or preferably more gifted learners (not your own child);
- (c) have access to a computer with internet and email and preferably connected to a printer.

How much time is involved?

Individuals do vary, of course, but across the whole of the course, you should expect to spend about 120 -150 hours including assessment requirements.

Why online?

The most obvious advantage of an online course is that it can be accessed no matter where you live. That's a huge plus for those in rural areas, but it's also often a help for those in the city where travel to a venue can still often be a problem. And it means you can access the course even if you live in another country! Another big advantage is that, while there are some practical tasks you'll need to do during your working day when you have access to students, much of the work for this course you can do in your own time whenever it's convenient for you. Lastly, there's an advantage for schools too as they don't have to pay for relievers for you to attend workshops on top of your registration fee. Good news for everyone!

What level of computer skills will you need to have?

The intention of this course is to be as accessible as possible. We have chosen to use an online format so that it is available to you wherever you live. But we have also deliberately taken into account the fact that not everyone has either the time or the skills required for more sophisticated computer activities. Teachers are extremely busy people!

Therefore you need to have only basic skills. You will need only to be able to:

- send and receive messages by email;
- access the internet and use a search engine such as Google to find relevant material (we will explain how to do this if you do not already know).

What's the on-campus option?

An optional 1½ day workshop/seminar is generally held midway through the course. The workshop provides an opportunity for you to meet your tutor and the other members of your group in person, together with the members of other groups running concurrently with yours. Each workshop is organised around issues relevant to the strategies you are exploring and reflects the interests and queries raised by members of the course. The workshop also provides an opportunity to discuss building networks which will last beyond your participation in this course. There is a small additional fee to cover costs, and dates and venue will be announced as soon as possible after the course starts.

Attendance is not mandatory, but while it will not affect your ultimate completion of the course, we do strongly recommend that you attend the residential workshop if you possibly can, simply for your own benefit.

Who will teach the course?

The course is taught by tutors with considerable depth of experience in both gifted education and professional development. We have worked with gifted learners of all ages, in the classroom, in special groups, and in out-of-school programmes. Amongst us we have research, advisory and leadership experience. See our "About Us" section on the REACH website: www.giftedreach.org.nz/aboutus_staff.htm (Updated each year). Details on your tutor will be included in your preliminary package.

What does it cost?

(1) Course fee

(a) For **New Zealand residents** the fee for the course is currently NZ\$870.00 +GST (NZ\$72.50+GST per module in total).

- ★ An early-bird discount of NZ\$65 applies if fees are paid in full three months prior to the start of the course.

(b) For **Australian applicants**, the fee is A\$870.00 (A\$72.50 per module). GST is not required.

- ★ An early-bird discount of A\$65.00 applies if fees are paid in full three months prior to the start of the course.
- ★ Australian teachers: if your institution is paying for you, remember that you will need to send us a **Purchase Order** with your enrolment form. Your office will need our ABN: this is **66 877 271 885**.

(b) For **applicants from all other countries**, the fee is US\$870.00 (US\$72.50 per module). GST is not required.

- ★ An early-bird discount of US\$65.00 applies if fees are paid in full three months prior to the start of the course.

For everyone

As soon as we have confirmed that we have a place available for you, we will send your school or centre (or you if you are paying personally) an invoice for the fee.

Payment options

- ★ Where your school or centre is paying for you, payment is required by the time the course commences.
- ★ If you are paying for yourself, we prefer payment in full before the course commences, but are prepared to discuss payment options where that would help to make it possible for you to enrol.

Cancellation and refund policy

- You may withdraw without penalty up until the course starts. Fees paid will be refunded in full for withdrawals up to that point. After that time, at the discretion of the director, withdrawals may incur an administration charge and a proportion of the tutor's fees.

What are the dates for the course?

Option 1 Southern hemisphere participants: March start date

Your modules begin in mid to late March and are concluded by the end of Term Three (NZ dates), with your final assignment due early in October.

Option 2: Northern hemisphere participants: after your annual long break

As term times vary in different parts of Europe, the Americas and Asia, we will negotiate exact dates with you, depending on exactly when your country has its long summer break and when your new school year begins. In general, we will negotiate a schedule with you that allows you to complete the course within one school year.

How can you enrol?

(1) Enrolment times

For both options, you can enrol at any time from six months before the course starts.

- We will ask you to confirm your enrolment no later than ten (10) days before the course starts.
- However, late enrolments are accepted, subject to places being available.

If you are unsure of your commitments but don't want to miss out on a place – for example, you may be waiting on funding availability – you can also *register interest* in enrolling at a later date. We will send you a reminder closer to the time.

- To register interest, send us an email (reacheducation@xtra.co.nz) with the words “enrolment reminder” in the subject line. Include your contact details. Please state your preferred email address in your contact details and your preferred time frame from the two options shown above.

(2) Enrolment process

- An enrolment form will be forwarded to you on request, or, if you are accessing this via our website, you will find a downloadable enrolment form on the same page as this prospectus. Instructions on returning your completed enrolment are on the form.
- We will notify you as soon as we have placed you in a course.
- In the event of current courses being fully subscribed before your enrolment is received, your name will be placed on a waiting list and you will be immediately advised of this and of the starting date for the next course.

Any questions? Feel most welcome to email us at:
reacheducation@xtra.co.nz

We look forward to having you join us!



Participants at our on-campus workshop/seminar