



Gifted education opportunities
for children, parents and teachers

Making a Difference: Passion and Big Picture Thinking as the Keys

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*The development of an independent consultancy in gifted education and its impact
in the community*

Timeline

2001	<p><i>Thinking Ahead</i> is born. Name is registered, logo, venue and support of local schools enlisted.</p>	
2002	<p>Workshops every 2 weeks for 10-12 yr olds start Term 1, for 8-9 yr olds in Term 3. Some children travelled from the country to attend. Commenced CoGE, first gifted conference</p>	<p>To date I have worked individually with more than 200 gifted children and their families.</p>
2003	<p>Our family relocate to the city. The first city based holiday programs run in July with 107 children attending. 3 levels, mix and match program, no formal identification requirements. Mass mail outs to all schools in WA (over 1000)</p>	<p>1,134 children have come through the holiday workshops, many coming regularly over the years</p>
2004	<p>Holiday workshops continue in new venue. Domain name secured, program available online. First <i>Making a Difference</i> conference attracts 160 people. Parent seminar, Differentiation workshop series, PD run for several schools.</p>	<p>There are more than 1400 people on my data base</p>
2005	<p>Holiday workshops continue, levels renamed. <i>Making a Difference</i> conference plus early childhood, differentiation and visual spatial conferences and seminars. Jason Expedition training. Started working with families for education planning and advocacy. Started M Ed (Gifted and Talented) externally. New logo, brochure, website, online registrations and payments available.</p>	<p>I have potentially impacted on the lives of approx 4000 people and indirectly on many, many more through the teachers who have attended courses, seminars and PD and who have looked differently at their students as a result.....</p>
2006	<p>Holiday workshops rotate between 2 venues, 3rd <i>Making a Difference</i> conference, various seminars. Family consultations double. PD in schools continues, adolescent program planned, attend Wallace Symposium</p>	<p>The next step.....</p>
2007	<p>Holiday workshops and conference continue, PD in schools continues, adolescent camp is planned (but doesn't run). Consultations double again. It is almost a full time job now. MEd completed</p>	<p>The idea of 2006 is germinating and more services will be able to be provided through an independent Not For Profit</p>
2008	<p>Holiday programs, PD and rapidly growing number of family consultations. Wallace Symposium and visits to 3 gifted schools in USA, other conferences in Singapore and Hobart.</p>	
2009	<p>Consultations continue to grow, holiday workshops, PD with schools continue, NZ and World gifted conferences. 51 students sit the EXPLORE test in an arrangement with CTD.</p>	

The Challenges to providing gifted services independently of the established systems.....

- Lack of time
 - Lack of a network of others in the area
 - Wearing so many hats – being responsible for all parts of the business
 - Working from home means you never leave work.....
 - The perception that you are ‘in it for the money’ (i.e. room hire at commercial rates, some services unavailable) by some people
 - Emotionally draining
 - Clear lack of information amongst teachers and health professionals
 - Decisions still made based on lack of knowledge
 - Not being able to reach all those that need assistance
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- The sense of the lack of progress - until you hear from parents that the interventions have made the world of difference

The Rewards

- Meet wonderful children and families
- Watching the dynamics change in a holiday workshop when the kids discover there are others like them
- Seeing the kids *sparkle* when they are engaged or finally click with a friend
- Positive feedback from parents
- Ah-ha moments with teachers when they think about some of their students in a different way
- Schools who are more willing to accelerate students or provide more flexibly

And most of all..... knowing you have made a difference

In the beginning I was in it for the kids.....

I am still in it for the kids..... although my own have now grown

Thinking outside the box – 99% of the time the answer is on the inside