Providing for Exceptionally Gifted and Able Students in a Second Level School

A Case Study:

Pipers Hill College
Who are we?

- Katie O’Connell and Maria Sunderland.
- KWETB
- 994 Students
- 20% of our Students have a SEN
- Established reputation in the area of SEN
- 2011 Gifted Programme established
What does exceptionally able mean for a student in school?

- Able IQ range 120 to 129
- Exceptionally able IQ range 130 to 169
- Profoundly exceptionally able IQ range 170+
- Within a school, Pupils with ability in the 97th percentile level are seen as having special educational needs.
Profiles of Exceptionally Able students in a Second Level School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Successfuls</td>
<td>High achievers/ seeks approval/ non risk taker/ does well academically/conforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Challengers</td>
<td>Question Rules/Authority/Creative/Inconsistent/Do not conform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Undergrounds</td>
<td>Hide ability to fit in/wants to belong socially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dropouts</td>
<td>System failed them/dreamers/isolated/self critical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Double Labeled</td>
<td>15% of CTYI Students- Physical/Emotional/Learning Difficulty Inconsistent/disruptive/seems average or below. Schools often focus on their weaknesses not strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Autonomous Learner</td>
<td>Thinkers/Beyond curriculum/problem solvers/risk takers/elf directed independent learners.</td>
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</tbody>
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What whole school approach did Pipers Hill College take?

- A policy was written in 2011 and shared with all staff and board of management members.
- Teachers were made aware of students with exceptional ability in their class or classes.
- Subject Department plans and lessons were differentiated to take into account the needs of the exceptionally able student.
- A Whole School Staff Professional Development Workshop took place in the area of Giftedness along with CPD in teaching and learning methodologies.
Developed links with DCU and other outside organisations.

Established an Identification/Referral Process within Pipers Hill College.

Developed enrichment opportunities through School Based Programmes.

Developed a Pastoral system, Social clubs, Societies, Councils and Mentor systems which support our Gifted Students.

Promote a culture within the school which encourages, recognises and rewards achievement.
Identification

Ability is not always easy to spot...

- **William Butler Yeats**’ early school report described his performance as ‘Only fair. Perhaps better in Latin than any other subject. Very poor in spelling’.

- **Einstein** was four years old before he could speak and seven before he could read.

- The Kansas City Star Editor fired **Walt Disney** due to lack of creativity.
How do we identify gifted and able students?

- Students are identified initially using the CAT4 Results. Guidance Department review CAT4 results and inform Parents of Students who meet CTYI criteria.

- They are also identified from in-house school examination reports.

- Staff, Self, Peer, Parent nomination forms are available for school based programmes.
School based programmes outside the core timetable

- Advertised for Lecturers in Maynooth and DCU.
- Invited a number of Lecturers into Pipers Hill College to provide learning opportunities beyond the curriculum.
- Lectures took place after school hours and are accompanied by Staff member.
- Programmes generally last 6-8 weeks.
- Students have successfully competed in competitions based on the work undertaken during these programmes.
- Students are invited to participate based on their strengths and interests.
School Based Provision Programmes ran to date in Pipers Hill College.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Medicine</th>
<th>Architecture</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
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<tr>
<td>Computer App Design and Web Design</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Debating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Design</td>
<td>Robotics</td>
<td>Coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>Creative Writing</td>
<td>Rocket Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These programmes provided opportunities for like minded Students to work and socialise together.

Programmes provided at no cost to Students.

Realise the importance of discussion, innovation, debate and independent thinking while encouraging abstract and complex thought.
Differentiation

- Intentionally teaching to the different needs of individual students in a classroom.
- Allowing for advanced learning opportunities both within and beyond the curriculum.
Extension Activities

- Many exceptionally able students can finish classroom exercises quickly.

- Extension activities are available in the classroom to bridge the time gap between students in a mixed ability classroom.

- Extension activities should be designed to further challenge, stimulate and motivate students – not to be perceived as punishment!
Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

- A hierarchical system that can assist teachers in designing tasks, crafting questions and providing feedback.

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  Higher Order Skills

  Creating
  | Evaluating
  | Analyzing
  | Applying
  | Understanding

  Remembering
```
Higher Order Skills

- **Analysing** – providing students opportunities to see the “bigger picture”, to create connections and patterns.
  - “What is the general rule?”, “Explore the future possible consequences”, etc.

- **Evaluating** – teaching students how to balance decisions against reason and evidence.
  - “How do you know?”, “What are the arguments for and against...?”, etc.

- **Creating** – giving students opportunities to create something new with the knowledge and skills that they have learned.
  - “How would you change...?”, “What would happen if...?”, etc.
What can you do?

**Teacher**

... refer to the NCCA Guidelines and establish link in with the SEN and SMT.

... use a variety of classroom methodologies to meet the differing needs of students

**Parent**

... support the school, link in with the SEN Coordinator and SMT and within your local school community put together a list of professionals who would be willing to facilitate workshops.

... engage in dialogue with your son/daughter about their learning and encourage the development of higher order skills