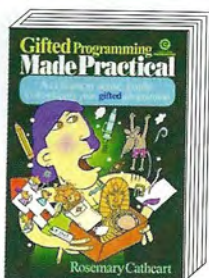


CORBIS



Practical guide to the



Gifted Programming Made Practical: a common sense guide to developing your gifted programme

Differentiation Made Practical: lessons to satisfy gifted learners, their classmates and teachers

By Rosemary Cathcart

Essential Resources

Both £16.95

Selena Gallagher

Meeting the unique and diverse needs of gifted learners within an increasingly crowded and prescriptive curriculum is an ongoing challenge, but these two books aim to make that task a little easier.

Gifted Programming Made Practical: a common sense guide to developing your gifted programme does exactly what it says on the cover: it breaks down the daunting task of developing a school gifted programme into practical stages, from defining the role of the gifted education co-ordinator, to deciding how to assess pupils' work.

It is aimed primarily at those teachers who find themselves taking on this role in primary schools with little previous experience and knowledge of gifted learners. The book is an easy read, with

little in the way of research jargon, and is a manageable size at 60 pages.

The first half of the book concentrates on providing background information necessary for teachers who will work with these pupils. It asks and answers questions such as: "How can we identify gifted children effectively?" and "How does giftedness affect the child's learning?"

The second part outlines the more practical aspects of preparing for, and getting through, the first day and beyond. The questions of learning environment, required resources and work products are discussed, as well as assessing and reporting on children's progress.

This is a no-nonsense guide to beginning a gifted programme and would be useful for teachers who find themselves with responsibility for gifted learners.

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Differentiation Made Practical: lessons to satisfy gifted learners, their classmates and teachers is more widely applicable and should be of interest to any teacher who has pupils with a range of ability in their class (which, let's face it, covers most teachers). This book is written in a similar common-sense style and is of an equally manageable length.

The first section examines the process of planning differentiated units of work and challenges teachers to plan in new ways by asking three significant questions, which may seem obvious but may have been overlooked. It proposes a conceptual approach to planning that will incorporate differentiation seamlessly into the process, rather than being a time-consuming add-on. The process is explained in detail through the use of a specific example

About the author Rosemary Cathcart



Rosemary Cathcart is a leader in the gifted education field in New Zealand and has more than 30 years' experience as a teacher and an advocate.

She developed the pioneering One Day School for gifted students in New Zealand. Her work led her to develop the REACH model for teaching gifted children, which is outlined in her earlier book, *They're Not Bringing My Brain Out*. She currently focuses on providing professional development in gifted education for teachers.

which makes it clear how it works in practice. The book then introduces a multi-dimensional model to help plan the specific learning experiences pupils will engage in. A useful checklist of likely learning behaviours that may be observed if the approach is working is also included.

Most of this book is taken up with in-depth examples of the model in action, with topics ranging from the Olympics to ancient Egypt, as well as more abstract themes such as "thought" and "walls". For the inexperienced or time-poor teacher who is nervous about putting differentiated planning into practice, these units can be used as they are or modified to suit the educational context. As teachers gain confidence, they can use the step-by-step process to develop their own plans for their own topics.

The examples provided would mostly fit into social studies, with some overlap into science. These are important areas, but it would have been useful to see how the model could be applied to maths and literacy, as these are areas in which teachers may feel less confident in differentiating their instruction and where pupils spend a large proportion of their time.

The verdict

9/10

My life in books

Elli Housden is a former English teacher at Tollbar Academy, New Waltham, Lincolnshire, and author of a series of secondary English textbooks

What I'm reading



The Help

By Kathryn Stockett

I received a Kindle for Christmas so it has been a treat to have the world's literature at my

fingertips. *The Help* is one of my favourite novels that I have been revisiting. It is set in 1962 in Mississippi and traces the friendship of two African-American maids and the heroine, Skeeter, who has just graduated from university. Since *To Kill a Mockingbird*, I have loved books set in the Deep South, even if they do reveal disturbing undercurrents of racism. *The Help* is a wonderfully warm and humorous debut novel. The film is being released in August.

The book I loved as a child



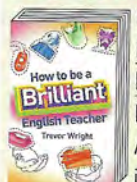
Cold Comfort Farm

By Stella Gibbons

I was a voracious reader of English literature from an early age. This novel really tickled my sense of

humour. Twenty-year-old Flora Poste, a prepossessing young lady, is left orphaned and penniless. So she goes to find her family connections in Sussex. What she discovers is a bizarre and backward mix of individuals.

Read this before you die



How to be a Brilliant

English Teacher

By Trevor Wright

I read Wright's book in Australia in 2005 and found it insightful and practical.

"Good teachers understand knowledge, but brilliant teachers understand ignorance," he says. Wright gives lots of examples of ways to focus on planning lessons with "small" objectives, rather than grand visions too complex to be achieved. Even if the book is just used as a revision lesson, it is still worthwhile.

● If you would like to share your life in books with other teachers, email features@tes.co.uk