



Enrichment

Challenge for Excellence

School-wide enrichment identifies, develops, and supports the gifts and talents of all students through a broad range of opportunities and experiences. As a result of enrichment opportunities and experiences some students will be identified as requiring additional program options in response to their demonstrated gifts and talents.

- > *Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment and Gifted Education Resource Guide* (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 1999) provides a framework for developing enrichment experiences to enhance student learning.

- > Resources:

The School-Wide Enrichment Model: A How-To Guide for Educational Excellence by J.S. Renzulli and S. M. Reis (1997)

Enrichment Clusters: A Practical Plan for Real-World, Student-Driven Learning by J. S. Renzulli, M. Gentry, and S. M. Reis

- > Learning centres are areas arranged in the classroom or school that invite students to explore and examine particular concepts, issues, or themes.

Enrichment Teaching and Learning

The concept of enrichment teaching and learning follows these basic principles: (Renzulli, Gentry, & Reis, 2003)

1. Each learner is unique.
2. Learning is more effective when students enjoy what they are doing.
3. Student learning is more meaningful and enjoyable when:
 - content and process are learned within the context of a real and present problem
 - knowledge and thinking skill acquisition is enhanced

School-Wide Enrichment

School-wide enrichment is comprised of a systematic set of specific strategies that may include a combination of the following components:

- **Enrichment Clusters:** groups of students across grades with self-identified similar interests working together in a specially designated time block (6–8 weeks) to produce a product, performance, or targeted service for an appropriate audience
- **Academies of Inquiry and Talent Development:** secondary school level enrichment clusters that focus on advanced content and processes within an identified discipline for an extended period of time
- **School-Wide Enrichment Model: Enrichment Triad** (Renzulli & Reis, 1997):
 - Type I: exploratory activities that are introductory and event-oriented
 - Type II: skill-building activities that are methods- and materials-oriented (including research, thinking, problem-solving, and how-to skills)
 - Type III: independent study of authentic problems that are product- and audience-oriented (advanced, investigative project based on student interests and strengths)
- **Total Talent Portfolios:** a method for gathering and recording information about students' abilities, interests, and preferred learning styles (A variety of portfolios may be used, such as the Nova Scotia Student Life/Work Portfolio.)
- **Enrichment Events and Activities for Students:** seminars, school-wide challenges, guest speakers, learning centres, workshops, science fairs, and knowledge festivals

Supporting
Student
Success

Characteristics and Behaviours of Gifted and Talented Learners

Although no single criterion can be used to determine giftedness, students who demonstrate above average ability, creativity, and high levels of task commitment are considered to exhibit gifted behaviours.

Some characteristics of gifted learners may include: rapid learning, easily bored by repetition, independent and/or abstract thinking, desire to solve “real” problems, and a wide range of sophisticated interests. These characteristics are not all inclusive and students with gifts and talents may not exhibit all of these characteristics at any given time.

Identification of Gifted and Talented Learners

- > Program planning team members should be those who have responsibility for the student’s learning and should always include the principal or vice-principal, teachers involved, and parents, and may include the student. (*Special Education Policy Manual, Policy 2.2*)

To identify gifted and talented learners for an individual program plan, the program planning team takes into consideration multiple areas and sources of data, such as

- academic achievement (student products, previous report cards, informal and formal classroom assessment, psycho-educational testing, and personal learning logs)
- learning styles, strengths, interests, and special abilities (inventories, rating scales, conferencing, portfolios, co- and extra-curricular involvement, hobbies, and information from parents)
- visions and goals for the future (journals, career inventories, community interests, secondary and post-secondary education planning)

Gifted Education Strategies and Programming

- > Additional information can be obtained from *Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment and Gifted Education Resource Guide* and the “Challenge for Excellence Video Series” available from

- Nova Scotia Department of Education website <www.EDnet.ns.ca>
- Nova Scotia School Book Bureau Authorized Learning Resources List
- School Board Programs and Services Divisions

For those students identified as requiring extended challenges in order to meet their unique intellectual, artistic, creative, or leadership needs, a combination of strategies and programming options should be considered. These may include

- differentiated curriculum and instruction—recognizing differences in students has an impact on what students need to learn, the pace at which students need to learn, and the support they need
- flexible grouping (such as varying group compositions and duration)
- curriculum compacting (streamlining curriculum to reduce repetition and provide time for students to work on Type III research projects)
- broad-based themes and multidisciplinary units of study
- alternative program and course options such as Challenge for Credit, Independent Study, distance education, weekend/summer programs, co-operative education, university/college courses, International Baccalaureate)
- advanced Public School Program (PSP) courses
- acceleration—enabling students to meet curriculum outcomes at a faster pace based on their needs and abilities in accordance with individual school board guidelines
- mentoring—professionals and experts who strengthen students’ interests and level of understanding

For more information about school-wide enrichment, please contact

School: School Principal

School Board: Student Services Co-ordinator

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