

**“What the hell were you thinking?” The development of Philosophy at Hale School, Western Australia as an approach addressing curriculum differentiation for gifted students.**

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When appointed to Hale School, Western Australia as Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, the brief was simple: ‘Establish the best gifted programme you can, as quickly as possible!’ Using the enormous amount of research in gifted education as a reference point, the challenge did not seem to lie in identification, in provision, or monitoring – all of which the school was already doing well, rather the challenge lay in differentiation. Differentiation – the creation of a distinctly ‘different’ curriculum, tailored to the needs of gifted students was the real challenge. Using the Williams and Maker’s Models of Curriculum Differentiation, Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development, along with the (gifted-modified) Bloom’s Taxonomy, we sought to establish an initiative in Philosophy in the Senior School. Working closely as a team, the Challenge Programme Co-ordinator (Gifted Education) and key members of the Department of Philosophy, Values and Religion established a Philosophy Club, initiated the study of Philosophy as a subject, and created the ***Philosothon***, an inter-school competition, designed to allow gifted students from different schools and environments the opportunity to come together and participate in Communities of Inquiry facilitated by University Students and judged by academics from each of the Universities in the State. Additionally partnerships with other Philosophy Clubs have allowed a comparison of models and approaches, strengthening the club. The impact of these initiatives has been measurable within the school community and have demonstrably met the need for intellectual challenge of the gifted boys. As a Case Study in Differentiation, the development of Philosophy at Hale School has been an enormous success.