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ARTICLE

A Proposal for a Student Magazine Enrichment Programme

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Abstract

British-trained educators working in international settings face the challenge of supporting students in environments which may not be receptive to conventional British educational practices regarding student support interventions. This hypothetical case study, based in a Shanghai bilingual primary school, presents an opportunity to introduce and run a culturally and contextually sensitive student support initiative in a school that does not run interventions as standard procedure. More able students are identified as the target group for this intervention, which aims to extend and stretch them academically and culturally, provide peer group support and be a vehicle for the development of student agency through participation in an extracurricular student-led school magazine. A case study proposal for this student support intervention is presented, which provides guidance on how to analyse the impact of this intervention if it is chosen to be implemented.

Introduction

As an educator, it is an affirming experience to witness a child achieve greatness; to watch as a child discovers not only themselves but who they have the potential to be. While every child deserves the opportunity to determine how far their talents and hard work can take them (Greening, 2017), 15-20% of children may find that their abilities lie outside of the average ability range (Renzulli, 2014), and they may discover that their inner greatness can develop into a gift or talent that can be shared with society. These students are the leaders and innovators of tomorrow, but they are also some of those who are most at risk of underachievement and failure at school (Stephen and Warwick, 2015).

The pages that follow present a proposal for a student support intervention of a class-size-group, extracurricular school magazine student enrichment programme for more able Y3-Y5 students in a Shanghai private bilingual primary school. Design and justification for the programme are discussed, as well as monitoring and impact assessment. The latter part of this essay focuses on a proposed case study of this enrichment programme, utilising various research methods as part of a descriptive case study. Analysis of evidence and potential findings are briefly addressed.

The issue of provision for *more able* students is far greater than addressing every child's right to an education that "…must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full" (UNICEF, 1991: Article 29). While the provision of education for *more able* learners is enacted on a school level, attitudes, initiatives and policies regarding the provision for *more able* students reflect societal values of inclusion and recognition of individuality and excellence. As such, on an international scale, addressing this issue has numerous and varied approaches (Wallace and Eriksson, 2006). While the ideological approach of this intervention proposal and attached case study sit within the bounds of the British educational school of thought, the initiative is intended for a Chinese school. As such, the intervention design addresses and accounts for an alternative perspective regarding the provision of student support. Consequently, this enrichment programme proposal and hypothetical case study are an exercise in bridging the ideological gap by a British educator working in an international setting. Is it possible to work within the professional and cultural bounds of a societally, ideologically and morally different country and remain true to the beliefs and practices that define British-trained educators?

Literature Review

Defining *More Able* Students

A search for literature about educating *more able* students showcases the varied definitions, understandings and practitioner approaches to educating *more able* students. Even the term *more able* that will be used throughout this essay is potentially contentious, borrowed from the National Association for Able Children in Education (Shepherd, 2021), as a catch-all phrase encompassing *more able/most able/highly able/exceptionally able* students. No single, conclusive definition exists (Montacute, 2018; NCCA, 2007), but instead, myriad academic and practitioner-focused work is presented to any would-be researcher.

Zanetti et al (2020) remark at length on the numerous definitions for high ability students and posit that "giftedness" must be understood as a fluid, multi-faceted concept that cannot be attributed to any one thing or manifested in any one way. Clark and Shore (2004) identify *more able* students in terms of accomplishment or potential for accomplishment. There are national and international associations and support groups dedicated to helping parents and educators define, identify and provide for *more able* learners, with definitions such as students who "learn faster, earlier and differently" from their peers (https://www.giftedkids.ie/) and students who "perform - or have the capability to perform - at higher levels" than their peers (www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/what-giftedness). These definitions leave enormous room for interpretation and, as Stephen and Warwick (2015) observe, too much time has been spent defining these students and not enough providing for them.

Implications of under-provision

For the UK government, defining the *more able* learner has taken a back seat to providing for them (Loft and Danechi, 2020). In the wake of the UK government's 2010 decision to discontinue the 'Young, Gifted & Talented' programme, definitions of *more able* students vary across the UK and identification and provision for *more able* learners is the devolved responsibility of schools (Loft and Danechi, 2020: 3). Alongside the UK government, academics and practitioners are recognising the societal implications of the immense waste of talent by not providing an appropriate education for *more able* learners (Clark and Shore, 2004; Stephen and Warwick, 2015). Inaction on this issue means that societies are at risk of not realizing their most valuable assets, slowing economic growth and not promoting great leaders (Stephen and Warwick, 2015; Smithers and Robinson, 2012).

More able students are not realizing their potential at a disproportionate rate amongst socially and economically disadvantaged demographics (Montacute, 2018). Devastatingly, this is in line with achievement statistics for all ability level students from disadvantaged backgrounds (OECD, 2013); Greening comments "…less-advantaged children fall behind their more affluent peers in the early years and the gaps widen throughout school and beyond" (2017, p. 6). Clark and Shore comment on the international occurrence of this issue and name *more able* students who are socially and/or economically disadvantaged as the "gifted underserved" (2004, p. 37). These students lack the financial, material or social support of their peers and are at risk of non-identification for a huge range of generic and culture/country-specific reasons. Wallace and Eriksson write extensively on the diverse range of international identification and provisional issues surrounding this learning need, "including linguistic dominance, cultural prejudice, classism, racism, religious intolerance, sexism, ableism, ageism and nativism" (2006, p. xxi). As commented on by the founder of the Sutton Trust, Sir Peter Lampl, in the foreword of Smithers and Robinson (2012), to truly create fair nations where *more able* individuals have equal access and opportunities to influential and leadership positions, change must begin in their access to an appropriate education, no matter their socio-economic background.

The obligation that governments and schools have, to recognize and appropriately educate *more able* learners, is widely regarded as incredibly challenging (Cullen et al, 2018; Montacute, 2018; Smithers and Robinson, 2012; Ofsted and Wilshaw, 2016). Clark and Shore write:

> "This challenge becomes even more formidable when classes contain students of different ages, are very large in size, where teacher training is minimal, or physical or financial resources severely limited." (2004, p. 8)

Within the context of a complicated, potentially under-resourced, classroom environment it is unsurprising that some *more able* learners do not receive the support they need. Despite widespread acknowledgement of the necessity to provide for *more able* students, Montacute remarks

> "There is currently little evidence on how best to support highly able students, and even less on how to support students who are capable of high attainment who are from disadvantaged backgrounds." (2018, p. 4)

In a review of published studies, Enyi Jen (2017) found that only 17 empirical studies between 1984-2015 of student support interventions for high ability students existed. Clearly, the narrative shift away from identifying and defining *more able* learners to providing and assessing provision for them is long overdue.

There are direct and damaging consequences that the neglect of providing an appropriate education has on *more able* children. *More able* students who progress through school unchallenged and unstimulated coast through their educational career or even fail due to misunderstanding, lack of interest or boredom; they may manifest undesirable classroom behaviours and fail to establish positive relationships (Clark and Shore, 2004; Cullen et al, 2018). Simply put, a *more able* child may easily become "turned off" by the failure of their school to provide a stimulating learning environment (Delisle and Berger, 1990).

Extracurricular Activities as Enrichment Opportunities

Barber, Stone and Eccles (2005) comment that "there is good evidence that participating in school and community-based activities is associated with both short and long term indicators of positive development" (2005, p. 1). Across ability levels, participation by children in extracurricular activities "…has beneficial carryover into academic achievement and into broader areas of psychosocial functioning" (Barnett and Weber, 2008, p. 2). Students can "extend and enrich previously learned academic skills" and "develop interpersonal and social strategies" through participation in extracurricular activities (Haensly et al, 1985, pp. 110-111) and it has been shown that extracurricular activities have direct and indirect benefits on youth development (Morrissey and Werner-Wilson, 2005), academic achievement and noncognitive skills (Covay and Carbonaro, 2010). Undoubtedly, extracurricular activities can support the social, emotional and learning needs of *more able* students (Montacute, 2018).

In their paper written for the Department for Education, Cullen et al identify four strands that are critical in supporting *more able* (and disadvantaged) students (2018). Extracurricular activities have the potential to address three of these strands: academic extension, cultural extension and personal development, although the fourth strand, to address material poverty, is not within the scope of this student support intervention. In conjunction with other strategies and interventions undertaken by schools, extracurricular activities provide vital opportunities for *more able* students to realise their full potential (https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/extended-schools) and are well-received by *more able* learners (Cullen et al, 2018).

An extracurricular student magazine follows a social constructivist mode of thought, in which the students build their knowledge through working together (Schunk, 2020). Due to the flexible structure of the intervention, the student magazine has the potential to incorporate discovery learning, inquiry teaching and class discussions (Schunk, 2020). Teachers will follow Carl Roger's humanist approach of the teacher as the facilitator of learning (Bates, 2019), and will use reflective teaching practices (Scales, 2012) to respond to and adapt the lessons.

Ability grouping

In Britain, "streaming", "setting" or otherwise grouping according to ability has fluctuated in popularity and form since the 1960s (Hallam and Parsons, 2012), and the OECD reports that schools in numerous member and partner countries practice streaming in some form "to manage the diversity of the student population" (OECD, 2013, p. 83). Despite this longevity in educational practice, results of ability grouping are varying (Hallam and Parsons, 2012; Hallinan et al, 2003). Instead, mixed-ability classes whereby "brilliant teachers differentiate as a matter of habit" (Wright, 2017, p. 120) and well-designed, tailored lessons using high-quality resources to support *more able* learners in the classroom (Abellan-Pagani and Hebert, 2012) are common.

While school tier systems, class setting and in-class grouping show mixed results and vary country-to-country, Rogers (2006) remarks that:

> "...grouping tends to be the "least restrictive environment" for gifted learners, and the most effective and efficient means for schools to provide more challenging coursework, giving these children access to advanced content and providing them with a peer group" (2006, p. 4).

The National Association for Gifted Children (NACG) provides guidelines and support for grouping, including "enrichment clusters," such as an extracurricular interest group like a school magazine.

Intervention Design

This extracurricular student magazine enrichment programme is designed for *more able* students in years three to five in a Shanghai fee-charging bilingual primary school. Using Renzulli's approximation that 15-20% of students may be identified as *more able* learners (2014) and considering the enrolment of approximately 130 Y3-5 students, the programme must be able to accommodate a maximum of 26 Y3-Y5 students. Students will be selected through a combination of teacher, peer, parent, and self-recommendations as well as observation and existing school-wide identification tests, for example, Renaissance Accelerated Reader ZPD testing (NCCA, 2007). Due to the limited school resources allocated to student support interventions, further testing or psychologist identification are not feasible options. Instead, heavy reliance on and trust in teacher identification of *more able* students are vital for this intervention. As Stephen and Warwick note there is "overwhelming importance of the teacher in the success of any scheme for the most able" (2015, p. 118). Critical to the success of this intervention is the commitment of the teachers involved.

Involved teachers will undertake CPD programmes, such as those offered by NACE, https://www.giftcourses.co.uk/ or the Institute of Child Education and Psychology Europe. Due to budget restraints and the school's position that all students, regardless of ability, receive the same level of "attention", the school is unlikely to follow recommendations outlined by Clark and Shore (2004) regarding school-wide staff training. Teachers will share responsibility for management, monitoring and assessment of the magazine, and work on a leadership rota following the intervention content plan (Appendix 1).

As highlighted by Montacute "any method used to identify the highly able requires the assessor to decide on a definition of high potential or ability against which to assess" (2018, p. 10); furthermore, teachers involved in interventions must understand and support the definition (2018: 11). This programme uses the definition provided by NACE (Appendix 2) which defines a *more able* learner through their performance as well as their potential/capacity, relative to their age-level peers (Shepherd, 2021). There is a distinction from *high attainment* (defined by outcome), although there may be overlap. Additionally, as Baska and Van Tassel-Baska note, students with "…deficits in learning, attention, and socialization behaviors" (2018, p. 2) often miss out on identification for gifted programmes, which is a high possibility in this intervention due to minimal funding and lack of specialized staff.

Due to increased government involvement and regulation across the education sector (DESE, 2020), the programme must exist within the current, government-approved, student timetable. Accordingly, the extracurricular activity will be held twice weekly during P10. In line with government-approved parameters, each session of the student magazine has one teacher in the classroom, which is the same as all other classes at the school. Additionally, it is important to take into consideration the considerable pressure from Chinese parents to obtain the best, most comprehensive education possible for their children (Olcott, 2021) and design the enrichment programme to avoid engendering an atmosphere of resentment or suspicion from parents of children who are not participating in the intervention. As such, the school magazine will be awarded no additional funding than other extracurricular activities. While this is at odds with the British approach to provision for *more able* learners, which calls for significant attention and appropriate funding targeted to this issue (Smithers and Robinson, 2012), it considers the cultural and social context of a Shanghai fee-charging primary school.

The magazine meeting venue is the computer lab (Robinson, 2022), where students can work concurrently and which is a dynamic space that allows for individual work, group work and teacher-led instruction. The programme will run for the course of the academic school year and will follow the schedule outlined in

Appendix 1. The magazine will produce one issue per term and be available to parents, students and staff. It will be produced by the printing department of the affiliated high school and any costs involved in printing will be submitted to the logistics department through the standard procedure and covered by the extracurricular budget. There will be no charge for the magazine, and it will not rely on advertisements. The magazine will be managed and edited by the students, although final approval and edits will be the responsibility of the teacher leaders. Most of the content will be produced by the students involved in the intervention, although the magazine will be open for submissions from the student body to promote school community (Courtney, 2020) and pride.

This enrichment programme addresses the strands of academic extension, cultural extension and personal development that Cullen et al (2018) identify as crucial in the provision of education for *more able* learners. Direct tie-in to curriculum content as well as workshops and production of articles, columns, puzzles etc. will extend the students academically; engagement with community press/field trip opportunities will provide cultural extension opportunities; the development of student agency fulfils the criteria of personal development and growth opportunities.

Crucial in any student support programme is the ability to measure its effectiveness (Harris, 2022), use that information to "determine if your intervention benefited your students" (White, 2019) and make any adjustments accordingly. While some interventions have desired outcomes that can be measured using quantitative testing, the data needed for the evaluation of the student magazine enrichment programme is drawn from a variety of sources and is mostly qualitative in nature. Student feedback (ethically considered and with parent permission), and teacher and parent feedback are key data sources, as is behaviour monitoring. Qualitative data will be collected at regular monthly intervals through surveys and feedback forms, and limited quantitative data such as semesterly retesting with comparison against baseline data will be collected. Furthermore, behavioural records for the students involved in the intervention will be created and maintained by the staff leadership, as these are currently non-existent in the school.

As the success of the extracurricular activity will primarily be measured by the attitudes and experiences of the parents, teachers and students involved, it is necessary to identify what the intended outcome is, which is inherently tied to why this programme is necessary in order to arrive at that point.

Justification

Year on year, *more able* students leave the school in search of institutions that meet their needs; there is a clear requirement to support *more able* students. While a Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) may be a system that many schools aspire to (Renzulli, 2014), this is not possible in Chinese government-regulated schools. This intervention acts as an extracurricular enrichment programme to allow *more able* students to "mix freely with others who are equally gifted" (Stephen and Warwick, 2015, p. 77) while "taking the pupil 'wider and deeper'" (Stephen and Warwick, 2015, p. 67). Regarding the desired outcome, the primary goal is to provide a place where *more able* students can engage with their ability-level peers; a safe environment which is entirely adapted to their level. As such, teacher, student and parent responses will, ideally, positively reflect this and show satisfaction that the more *able* students' social, emotional and academic learning needs are being addressed and, hopefully, met. As referenced previously, according to the social constructivist model of thinking this environment will allow students to construct their knowledge and build their learning within a like-minded peer group.

In this enrichment programme, teachers are facilitators of student learning (Scales, 2012) while the students exercise agency over their own learning and have

> "...the capacity to set a goal, reflect and act responsibly to effect change. It is about acting rather than being acted upon; shaping rather than being shaped; and making responsible decisions and choices rather than accepting those determined by others" (OECD, 2019, p. 2).

The OECD (2019) recognises that student agency is a concept that is interpreted and adapted differently in countries across the world, but that the centrality of the student in their learning journey is a concept which is applicable in all societies. A student publication, like a school magazine, in which content selection, production and management are the responsibility of students is an ideal vehicle for students to develop

their agency through various student-led methods such as discussion, discovery learning and inquiry teaching.

A secondary measure of this programme's success are the teachers' responses regarding the suitability of student magazine work to be used as in-class differentiation resources. As extensively commented upon by Wright (2017), good teachers differentiate their lessons and recognise the varying ability levels of their students. All classes at the school are mixed ability, which means that teachers create appropriate and levelled content for the students. As commented upon previously, providing in-class enrichment opportunities for *more able* students can be a complicated and challenging endeavour (Clark and Shore, 2004), yet "differentiation in the classroom can improve academic outcomes for highly able students" (Montacute, 2018, p. 17). To allow for in-class enrichment opportunities and use by subject teachers for differentiation resources, there would be a direct tie-in of student magazine content to unit themes of the school's curriculum, for example *Animals in Nature* (Y3); *Problem Solvers* (Y4); *Technology in Today's World* (Y5).

Finally, it is worth noting that, currently, the school for which this programme is intended has no student support interventions in place. A culturally different environment means that practices and initiatives, such as safeguarding policies or student support interventions, which are commonplace at British schools are not commonplace at this school. Nonetheless, this does not mean that British-trained practitioners should leave behind pedagogical best practices but instead find innovative and culturally sensitive ways, such as this programme of *more able* provision, to fulfil the responsibilities of a British-trained practitioner.

Case Study Methodology

Following the implementation of the extracurricular student magazine, it will be possible to conduct a case study of the enrichment programme. This hypothetical case study will be qualitative in nature and will follow Marriam's definition: "a case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single, bounded unit" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 232). The case study will be undertaken by an employed teacher at the school, although someone who is not directly involved in the intervention.

Loft and Danechi (2020) comment that there is a lack of data regarding the impact that extracurricular activities have on *more able* learners, which is in line with Stephen and Warwick's assertion (2015) that defining *more able* learners has taken priority over provision for them. As such, there is limited information on best practices (Montacute, 2018) on which to reflect. Despite this, there is literature available more generally on the merits of extracurricular activities, although most research has focused on extracurricular activities for middle and high school students (Covay and Carbonaro, 2010). Additionally, practitioner-created content on blogs and websites advises on how to create a student magazine/newspaper (Robinson, 2022), which consistently centralises the student in the learning process. Furthermore, the OECD's "Student Agency for 2030" campaign (https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/student-agency/) provides information on student-led, agency facilitating initiatives, which can be related to this extracurricular enrichment programme.

Working within the bounds of Merriam and Tisdell's (2015) definition, this hypothetical case study functions to describe and analyse, rather than measure the success according to the intended outcomes, which is the remit of the programme's monitoring methods. As such, research methods have been selected for this hypothetical case study in order to build a holistic descriptive picture, which can then be triangulated with existing literature for analysis.

Data collection will be through the following methods:

Qualitative Observation (O'Leary, 2013) as *observer-as-participant* (Cohen et al, 2018); this is most appropriate for the natural continuation of the programme. As an *observer-as-participant* questions would not be posed to subjects, nor would the researcher deliberately steer behaviour.

Semi-structured interviews with involved staff; conducted at key points in the case study period. As the interviewer is familiar with the interviewee, a rigidly structured interview may produce a forced and

unnatural atmosphere. The research is heuristic in nature but with target spheres for questioning, so is well suited to a semi-structured interview (Cohen et al, 2018).

Focus Group of year group teachers; conducted at key points during the case study period, to provide a richer, more complete picture of the impact of the intervention, with attention given to the use of student magazine material as in-class differentiation resources (Cohen et al, 2018).

Semi-structured Questionnaire to assess the wider impact of the initiative. Provision for *more able* students should have school-wide benefits (Stephen and Warwick, 2015), such as building community or school pride.

Secondary data; is investigated and, if appropriate, incorporated (Cohen et al, 2018). Based on prior knowledge of the school, school-wide behaviour charts and achievement level data are unavailable, although according to the intervention design there will be behaviour-monitoring information available that has been collected for impact assessment purposes. If this can be anonymized, it may be suitable for inclusion as secondary data. Although there will be additional data from parents and students that have been collected for in-built intervention monitoring, this data is not suitable for the case study due to ethical and privacy considerations.

Based on the data collected, the case study will consider the implementation and impact of the extracurricular student magazine and analyse whether academic, cultural, personal and extension opportunities have been realized. Furthermore, the case study will assess the extent to which the social and emotional needs of *more able* learners have been met through the provision of an ability-level peer group, and whether this has had a positive impact. Finally, the case study will take a wider view and analyse whether the programme has had a school-wide impact. The research methods used in this case study feed directly into providing data on these three themes, which have been identified as core issues in the provision of education provision for *more able* students.

This case study is interpretivist and values the position of the researcher (Opie and Brown, 2019, p. 15-16). The value of qualitative research of this nature lies in the 'openness' of the research and its ability to be related to another setting (Bassey, 1984 cited in Opie and Brown, 2019). Considering the lack of 'best practice' research for interventions of this nature, 'relatability' is a practical application of this case study.

Conclusion

While the design and subsequent case study for the class-size-group, extracurricular school magazine student enrichment programme for *more able* Y3-Y5 students are entirely hypothetical, the justification is not. *More able* students are being let down within the school and on a worldwide scale. Lack of appropriate provision for *more able* learners has clear negative impacts: directly on the lives of children and indirectly on society (Ofsted and Wilshaw, 2016). Within the school at which this intervention is proposed for, *more able* students are seeking acknowledgement and education elsewhere or as indicated by literature on the topic (Montacute, 2018; Clark and Shore; 2004), are slipping into boredom, mediocrity or failure.

As such, this essay serves as more than a proposal for the creation of a school magazine; it is an appeal to school management for greater attention and care to be given to *more able* learners. This essay attempts to convey the international significance that every child has the right to develop themselves to their fullest capacity (UNICEF, 1991) and proposes that there are culturally sensitive ways to implement dynamic pedagogical practices. In an increasingly globalised world, knowledge, information and best practice are being shared in innovative and dynamic ways. Educators have the responsibility to bridge cultural divides and acknowledge that there are certain things that all children have a right to, no matter their social, economic, or national background. To act as an imposing educational colonialist is not the answer; instead, let educators harvest knowledge and best practices from around the world and implement these sensitively and contextually, in order to best serve the children.

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Appendix 1

Semester 1 Extracurricular Student Magazine Schedule
Mondays and Wednesday P10 16:05-16:45
Semester 2 Schedule TBD based on impact assessment and reflection

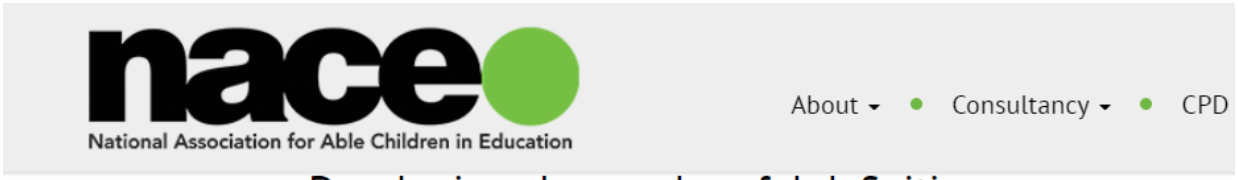
	Monday	**Wednesday**
Week 1	What is a school magazine? Background and introduction.	School magazine examples/best practices.
Week 2	What are the roles in a school magazine team?	Creating a role rota – why and how group discussion.
Week 3	Naming the paper – group or individual propositions	Present options and vote
Week 4	Essential skills workshop	Guest speaker – local reporter
Week 5	Understanding the sections of the magazine – prepare a feature proposal groupwork	Feature proposals and vote
Week 6	The first issue – assigning sections and roles	Ethics workshop
Week 7	Section teams work together – self manage	Section teams work together – self manage – article topic approval
Week 8	Section teams work together – self manage	Section teams work together – self manage
Week 9	Section teams work together – self manage	Section teams work together – self manage
Week 10	Share progress – feedback/comments	Share progress – feedback/comments
Week 11	Design the cover and layout – background/style guide	Design the cover and layout – ideas share
Week 12	Section teams work together – self manage	Section teams work together – self manage
Week 13	Peer review	Peer review – teacher approval
Week 14	Layout review	Final add-ins
Week 15	Print media distribution around the world	Distribution workshop – how/why/why/by who
Week 16	Print Week – reflections week	Reflections
Week 17	Ideas on moving forward	Planning for the next issue – feature presentations prep
Week 18	Feature presentation and vote	Role rota – job rotation – advice and guidance from previous role occupants
Week 19	Section teams work together – self manage	Section teams work together – self manage – article topic approval
Week 20	Field Trip – Visit a local newspaper/magazine – requires out of school hours participation and parent approval	How to keep writing over the holiday.

Appendix 2

Full Definition available at:

Shepherd, C. (12th March, 2021), *More able learners: key terminology and definitions,* National Association for Able Children in Education, *https://www.nace.co.uk/blogpost/1764156/367215/More-able-learners-key-terminology-and-definitions*

For reference purposed for this essay:



Developing clear and useful definitions

More able / most able / highly able

Due to their inherently similar meanings, it is easiest if the terms more able, most able and highly able are defined in the same way or encompassed within one "more able" definition which includes the following elements:

- Learners who have the **potential or capacity** for high attainment;
- Learners who **demonstrate high levels of performance** in an academic area;
- Learners who are more able **relative to their peers** in their own year group, class and school/college;
- Ability in all areas of the curriculum **or** in a specific subject/curriculum area, including the arts and physical activities.

Each of these elements is vital if the definition of "more able" is to be clear and encompass the breadth and flexibility needed to ensure outstanding provision.

Higher attaining

Whilst it is sensible to accept the terms more able, highly able and most able as having a shared definition, the term "higher attaining" has a distinct meaning and requires a separate definition.

This is an outcome-driven term and any definition adopted or developed for it must reflect this. If using this term, schools should ensure that it is simply a way of identifying learners based purely on their performance. Its use does allow schools to differentiate clearly between the more able, as defined above, and those who attain the highest standards. There is overlap between the two groups but, importantly, they can also be distinct.

So while this term can be useful, it should not be used interchangeably with or instead of "more able"; it means something entirely different.

Appendix 3

Observation – Unstructured – Noted to be made in the form of descriptions, field notes, classroom maps, reconstructions of group work/events

Place: Computer Lab

Date/Time: xx/P10

Class Topic/Subject: School Magazine Week ___ Day ___Topic ____

Role of the Observer: *observer as-participant*

Aim of the Observation (select): To describe a meeting of the school magazine

Observation of details of class process:

Observations on the themes:

1. Academic extension opportunities for *more able* learners
2. Cultural extension opportunities for *more able* learners
3. Personal development opportunities for *more able* learners
4. Peer-group support
5. Social/emotional development

Semi-structured Interviews with Key Staff Members

Interview Venue:

Interview Date/Time:

Interviewee role and name (to be redacted):

Interview topics (with options to tailor these questions to interviewee and flexibility to move away from the topic in the natural course of conversation)

1. Please describe your role/roles in the student magazine extracurricular enrichment programme.
2. Please describe your experience of the student magazine up until this point, in specific regard to organisation and management.
    a. Further probing
3. Please describe academic extension opportunities for *more able* learners that the school magazine has provided, based on your experiences.
    a. Further probing/prompting
    b. What has your role in this been?
4. Please describe cultural extension opportunities for *more able* learners that the school magazine has provided, based on your experiences.
    a. Further probing/prompting
    b. What has your role in this been?
5. Please describe academic personal development opportunities for *more able* learners that the school magazine has provided, based on your experiences.
    c. Further probing/prompting
    a. What has your role in this been?
6. How successful would you say the school magazine has been as a vehicle for development of student agency?
7. In comparison to the beginning of the programme, are the students showing social/emotional benefits of involvement in this 'ability-grouped' extracurricular activity?

    a. Further probing/prompting
8. Are there any other themes/issues that you think are notable regarding the enrichment programme? Would you like to bring them up now?

Focus Group interviews with teachers grouped by year – collective response sought

Interview Venue:

Interview Date/Time:

Year Group/number of participants:

Please discuss:

1. The usefulness of student magazine content as in-class differentiation resources for *more able* learners
2. Any noticeable behaviour changes of *more able* learners in your class since their participation in the student magazine began.
3. Your experience of the impact of the magazine on school community/pride.

Semi-structured Questionnaire:

1. I have observed students reading and positively engaging with the school magazine.
    a. Yes, I have observed this.
    b. No, I have not observed this.
    c. I have observed students reading the magazine but with little positive engagement.
    d. I have observed students reading the magazine and responding negatively.
    e. I am unable to say definitively.
2. The student magazine has had a noticeable effect on the student population, in specific regards to school community and pride:
    a. Yes
    b. No
3. Students involved in the school magazine show greater/lesser…

4. I have been able to use school magazine content as in-class differentiation resources by …

5. What advice would you give to organisers of the school magazine regarding
    a. Use for in-class differentiation
    b. Engendering school community pride